L. B. Boutell.

HISTORY

OF THE

REPUBLIC

OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

AS TRACED IN THE WRITINGS OF

ALEXANDER HAMILTON

AND

OF HIS COTEMPORARIES.

BY

JOHN C. HAMILTON.

VOLUME I. L. B. Boutell.

"Neque enim est ulla res, in qua propius ad Deorum numen virtus accedat humana, quam civitates aut condere novas aut conservare jam conditas."—*Cic. de Repub.*

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON & COMPANY,
BROADWAY
1857.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by
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PREFACE.

THE archives of the Government of the United States having been recently opened to me by the authority of the Library Committee of Congress, I have found a mass of material of great value, much of it hitherto unused.

These documents would, had their existence been known, have made a large addition to the Works of Alexander Hamilton, recently edited, the autograph letters written by him in behalf of Washington, while a member of his staff, and now in the department of State, exceeding a thousand in number.

Others have been traced in private collections. These all relate to the period of the American Revolution, comprised in this and the succeeding volume.

A wider field of view being obtained, I resolved to enlarge the plan of this work, and to embrace in it both a history and a biography. My object is to present a faithful, honest narrative—a series of authentic statements, which will bear the closest scrutiny, and thus be of service to my country.

N. B.—In frequent instances quotations are italicized, where in the original there are no italics.

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THE HISTORY

OF THE

REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED STATES.

CHAPTER I.

INDEPENDENCE was the natural ultimate condition of colonies as vigorous and remote from the parent government as were those of North America.

What form of being these independencies would assume, whether of distinct sovereignties, or of parties to one, or to several Federal compacts, or of members of one controlling National system, was the problem of their happiness.

As the "first idea of a real UNION OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES," is ascribed to ALEXANDER HAMILTON;* and as he had a large share in moulding their

* "Indeed he was *the first* to perceive and develop the idea of a real union of the people of the United States."—*History of the Constitution of the United States, by George Ticknor Curtis*, i. 413.

"Out of this boundless chaos, out of this immense mass of conflicting elements, the fair and majestic form of the American Federal Constitution gradually arose, *created by the masterly touch of his hand.*"—*The Life and Times of Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia*, 1856.

destinies, it is proposed to trace in his life and writings the history of the origin and early policy of this GREAT REPUBLIC.

In this view it is of especial interest to advert to the peculiar state and character of the colony of New York —the scene of his first and latest efforts—where the idea of an effective Union earliest took a definite shape.

Of all British America, this province had the greatest natural advantages. Situate between those parallels of latitude which comprise its most habitable portion—Its interior a part of that vast intervale which embraces the great lakes that, with their cataract, form the most remarkable feature of this continent—an extensive shore line accessible throughout the year, yet protected by an island that breasts the ocean, and with head lands of commanding defence.—Its seaport proudly seated at the mouth of a noble river, which, bursting its mountain barrier, glides gently onward, ere long to be connected by the hand of art with the far distant gulfs of Mexico and of the St. Lawrence—with a genial climate and a fruitful soil,—New York only required the exertions of unfettered industry to render it equal to all that nature intended.

Of the English colonies, which subsequently united, this alone was first peopled by persons not of English descent.

Six years after * the settlement of Virginia, a grant was made by the States General to "The United New Netherland Company," on the plea of its discovery, of the territory lying on the coast of North America, between the rivers Connecticut and Delaware, by them designated as the "New Netherlands." This grant conferred the exclusive right of visiting and trading with this distant region. The sole object of this colonization was trade with the

* 1614.

Indians,—to protect which, an earthen fort was erected at New Amsterdam, now the city of New York;* and another of pine logs at Fort Orange, now Albany, where the traffic in furs and peltry was conducted. In the beginning, a close monopoly, it was ere long opened to private merchants paying to the company fixed duties of import and export.

Soon after the organization of this company, its interests were transferred to a more numerous association, called the "Dutch West India Company," composed of wealthy and enterprising merchants.

Of these, a few purchased lands from the Indians; and obtained renewable patents† from the company, whose managers were termed "Lords Directors." These patentees were known as "Patroons;" at whose expense some of the first settlers were transferred hither, and others at the joint expense of the company.

* "The colony was planted, at this time, on the *Manhates*, where a fort was staked out. * * * The counting-house there is kept in a stone building, thatched with reed; the other houses are of the bark of trees. Each has his own house. The Director and *Koopman* live together; there are thirty ordinary houses on the east side of the river, which runs nearly north and south. The Hon. Peter Minuit is director there at present; Jan Lempo Schout (Sheriff), Sebastien Janz Cral, and Jan Huyck, Comforters of the Sick, who, whilst awaiting a clergyman, read to the commonalty on Sundays, from texts of Scripture with the Comment. Francois Molemaccher is busy building a horse mill, over which shall be constructed a spacious room, sufficient to accommodate a large congregation, and then a tower is to be erected, where the bells brought from Porto Rico will be hung."—*Wassenaer's Historie Van Europa*, 1621–1632. *In Doc. Hist. of New York*, iii. 27.

† The condition of renewal was the payment within a year "of *one pair of iron gauntlets*, and twenty guilders." This feudal acknowledgment is thus referred to by Prior:

> "The funeral of some valiant knight
> May give this thing its proper light,
> View his *two gauntlets* that declare
> That both his hands were used to war."

These settlers were from the frontiers of Flanders and France, lying between the Scheldt and the Lys, "the head-quarters of the Calvinists,"* chiefly peasants and handicraftsmen, bound to service for a term of years to remunerate the first outlay. Though poor, their poverty was that of exiles banished for their devotion to the rights of conscience. With them came a few freemen.

Over these colonists the Patroons were vested with the administration of civil and criminal justice; with power to establish towns; to erect courts; appoint the local magistrates. Their laws were the civil code, the enactments of the States-General, and the ordinances of the company in Holland; to whose supreme court an appeal was secured. Of these settlements, some were Manors, similar to those in Holland, exercising within themselves a limited civil and criminal jurisdiction, and enjoying other Dutch manorial rights; and smaller "Boweries." The professed religion was that of the Dutch Reformed Church.

In this simple state, this colony, though with frequent small arrivals from the Low Countries, remained feeble and unattractive. In the town of New Amsterdam was the chief increase.

Such was the policy observed, that forty years elapsed before permission was granted to it, as a boon, to nominate persons, from whom nine men were selected, by the Director and Council, to confer, as "Tribunes," on questions of the welfare of the commonalty and of the country—three merchants, three citizens, three farmers. Their successors were to be chosen by the director, without consulting the commonalty. This was in imitation of a tribunal of some antiquity in Holland. Two years after, the first application was made to the States-General for a

* History of Philip the Second, by William H. Prescott, ii. 22.

local government, the colony being invigorated by accessions of a higher class of emigrants from other parts of the Low Countries—who had passed through the furnace of persecution, had triumphed over the long-continued tyranny of Spain,* and brought with them the invaluable consciousness of their virtue and their power to resist.

Events were, meanwhile, preparing for a change that soon followed. The western limits of the colony were curtailed by settlements upon the Delaware. New England was pressing on the east, two-thirds of the island of Nassau, or Long Island, being occupied by emigrants from Connecticut, called "the New England Intrusions." The interior was trembling before the warlike Indian tribes, who, as the Six Nations, gave to the colonists the example of a Federal Republic, and, by their successes, taught the benefits of union.† The townspeople became discontented with a governor true to the duties of his situation, and, in the midst of local broils, England asserted her colonial claims. In sixteen hundred sixty-four, the Dutch capitulated to a force they were unable to resist. This capitulation secured to them freedom of conscience, their own church worship and discipline, the titles to their lands, and "their own customs concerning their inheritances."

The policy of the first English governor ‡ was equally wise. To encourage new planters, their purchases were to be made of the sachems, and to be recorded without license of the governor; they were to be joint and contiguous, forming townships; and to remain for ever free lands at the disposal of the owners. Each township to make its own laws, and to decide its small cases; to pay

* By the treaty of Westphalia, 1648, the independence of the Netherlands was acknowledged.

† Colden, ii. 113.

‡ Richard Nicolls.

its own minister, who was to be elected by the majority of the householders, the compensation stipulated; and to have the free choice of its officers, civil and military. New Amsterdam, now called New York, was incorporated. Not long after, the colony was recovered by the Dutch, but ere a twelvemonth was restored to England.*

Three years after the revolution in England, the first assembly of this province was convened. The English common law, and all existing statutes, not local, were declared to be in force, together with such colonial laws as should be passed by the assembly and council, and approved by the governor and by the crown—the government being composed of this assembly chosen by the people, and of the council and governor appointed by the king. A judiciary system was established, analogous, in many respects, to that of England, which continued more than an hundred years, being, in all its parts, the most complete that has existed in America.

Soon after the establishment of the English supremacy, began an exhibition of that independent spirit which resulted from the presence of different races, with different laws and customs, and differing religious creeds, under a government hated by the majority because of previous national contests, and now, a subjugated people.

An early, and for a time, an unsuccessful attempt to establish the supremacy of the Church of England, was among the first sources of discord. It was resisted by the Dutch population with all the earnestness of their sincere convictions and determined spirit, as a violation of the terms of their capitulation, claiming that a legal provision for the clergy equally contemplated Protestant dissenters.

* 1674.

The Dutch were strengthened by the advent of other dissenting settlers. French Huguenots came from England and the West Indies, smarting under recent proscription; a few poor Lutherans from the Lower Palatinate in Germany, also escaping persecution, were placed, by the charity of Queen Anne, in Ulster, on the Hudson, to which an Irish population gave its name; other Germans were seen on the east side of that river, while some subsequently settled on the fertile Mohawk, called the German flats. A body of Scotch Calvinists from Argyle followed, planting a town of that name in northern New York—a region as bleak as their own Highland home—serving as a brave frontier guard. A few emigrants from Wales were scattered through the province. These, together with the Puritans, from Connecticut, constituted a mass of discordant material,* but agreeing in one common feeling of resistance to the union of Church and State; somewhat tolerant to each other, wholly intolerant to those of the Romish creed,† and to the unoffending Quakers.

Before the excitement, which this moving question of a paramount church caused, had subsided, for it had been kept up by recent instances of religious violence, the assembly of this province took its stand on the great question of subsidies.

Dissatisfaction with the Governor had recently‡

* Governor Dongan's Report, 1687. "In New York were a minister of the Church of England—a Dutch Calvinist—a French Calvinist—a Dutch Lutheran Church." "Here bee not many of the Church of England; few Roman Catholicks—abundance of Quakers—preachers men, women especially—anti-Sabbatarians—some Anabaptists—some Independents—some Jews—in short of all sorts of opinion there are some, and the most part of none at all."

† An act was passed (1700), "for hanging every Popish priest that came voluntarily into the province,"—excused for the reason they were "continually practising upon our Indians."—*Smith's N. Y.*, i. 135.

‡ 1705.

prompted them to appoint a treasurer of the moneys raised by them, which, in an act for the defence of the frontier, they made payable to him. This was objected to, and a prorogation followed. The assembly was again convened in seventeen hundred and eight. Its purpose was not changed. Their "Charter of Liberties" had provided that "no tax shall be assessed, on any pretence whatever, but by the consent of the assembly."* They now pronounced such a procedure "a grievance, and a violation of the people's property;" and, with a large view of the future, declared that "any tax or burthen on goods imported or exported, or any clog or hindrance on traffic or commerce, will unavoidably prove the ruin of this colony." The obnoxious governor was removed, but the assembly was unmoved. They granted supplies, but limited them to the year, thus asserting their control over the public purse.

From this period, the history of this province exhibits an almost unceasing contest between the governors and the assemblies; the former menacing or soothing, as was their temperament; the latter firm in the main, but sometimes yielding from special motives or to special influences.

A short time after their declaration, that they could not be taxed without their own consent, the governor declared to them, "If you have been in any thing distinguished, it is by an extraordinary measure of royal bounty and care. I hope you will make suitable returns, lest some insinuations much repeated of late years, should gain credit at last, that, however your resentment has fallen upon the *governor, it is the government you dislike.* It is necesary at this time you be told also, that giving money for the support of government, and disposing of it

* Oct. 7th, 1683.

at your pleasure, is the same with giving none at all." They were told, that, like the council, they existed "by the mere grace of the crown." Not yielding, they were dissolved. Their successors, more compliant, and diverted by an expedition to Canada, voted a five years' support. Their septennial term expiring, a new election returned a more determined body. But indications of a purpose still more to limit their limited commerce, alarmed them. They voted a support to the government for six years; and granted out of it a salary, with emoluments, to the governor.* Not meeting the full extent of his expectations, open insult followed.† The population of the colony had doubled within thirty years. It now contained sixty thousand people, seven thousand of whom were slaves.

A new governor sought to conciliate this thriving province, which kept up its relations with Holland by a contraband trade, especially in teas. The assembly were inflexible, stigmatizing their predecessors as "betrayers of the rights of the people," in granting permanent funds, which, they charged, had been used with prodigality. They told him, "You are not to expect that we either will raise sums unfit to be raised; or put what we shall raise into the power of a governor to misapply, if we can prevent it; nor shall we make up any other deficiencies than what we conceive are fit and just to be paid, or continue what support or revenue we raise for any longer time than one year; nor do we think it convenient to do even that, until such laws are passed as we conceive necessary for the safety of the inhabitants of this colony, who have reposed a trust in us, for that only purpose, and which we

* 1732.

† The governor accosted Mr. Morris, one of the members, on this occasion, in terms expressing a contempt of the vote. "Why did they not add, shillings and pence? Do they think I came from England for money? I'll make them know better."—*Smith*, ii. 2.

are sure you will think it reasonable we should act agreeably to; and, by the grace of God we will endeavor not to deceive them." A recent verdict vindicating the liberty of the press in its American infancy,* had quickened the heart of the colony.

As results † of their patriotism, the militia act was remodelled; the practice of the law amended; courts of summary decision established; a school, recently instituted, encouraged; the system of annual provision reasserted; and triennial elections ordained. Other efforts to abridge the influence of the crown, and for the public good were made, but failed; and to complete the disappointment, the triennial act was rejected by the king.

Sore at this result, the next session exhibited the same determined spirit in all their acts, but denying their desire for independence. Sir George Clinton was now governor. With a temper little disposed to conciliation, and unable to control by patronage the growing dissatisfaction, after frequent altercations with, and prorogations of the assembly, application was made by him to the crown for the direct interposition of its authority. Yielding to this request, a new instruction was issued. It enjoined the commander-in-chief "to call the council and assembly together, and in the strongest and most solemn manner to declare the king's high displeasure for their neglect and contempt; to exact due obedience, to recede from all encroachments, to demean themselves peaceably, to consider without delay of a proper law for a permanent revenue, solid, indefinite, and without limitation, giving salaries to the officials, and providing for "all such other

* The first Newspaper, it is stated, was established in New York in 1733. The trial of Zenger was in 1735. Grahame's U. S. says the paper commenced in 1725.—iii. 167.

† 1737.

charges as may be fixed or ascertained." And it expressly directed that the assembly should have no supervision of the expenditure of their supplies. Clinton had been recalled, but the assembly were not the less resolved. Vindicating their conduct, and lamenting the discord, they still declared their conviction * "that it is not for the interest of his majesty and for the public good of this colony, to raise a support in any other manner than has been done for sixteen or seventeen years past, whatever it may be for the private interest of the governor." Their liberality, without any recompense from the crown, as granted to the other colonies, was stated; and they avowed their willingness "to hazard their lives, fortunes, and all that was dear to them, against all the king's enemies *whatsoever*."

This language had a meaning, for unwilling as New York was to surrender its rights to arbitrary mandates, it was most willing to enter upon a war for the acquisition of Canada. This accomplished, the pretext would no longer exist for a demand of extraordinary supplies; their colonial rights would be more definitely confirmed, and the terrible evils of an Indian war removed. The crown was not slow to avail itself of a feeling common to the British colonies. Regarding, from the recent extension of the French possessions, a contest for dominion in America as not remote, instructions were now addressed from England to the governor of each province, calling a Convention of Commissioners to represent it at Albany, in June, seventeen hundred fifty-four. The avowed objects of this assemblage were to preserve the friendship of the Six Nations of Indians, and to prevent encroachments on the British dominions. The commissions from the colonies all contemplated these ends, but their tone differed.

* 1753.

Most were guardedly limited to them; Massachusetts alone proposed "Articles of Union and Confederation of all the Provinces for their general defence, as well in time of peace as in war." At this important meeting, among the commissioners were seen Thomas Hutchinson from Massachusetts, Meschec Weare of New Hampshire, and Roger Wolcott of Connecticut, Franklin and Penn from Pennsylvania; the lieutenant-governor of New York, James Delancey, presiding.

The proposal of Massachusetts, though the first official recommendation of a Colonial Federal Government, was not the first suggestion of it. More than thirty years previous it had been publicly recommended.

Looking to the necessity of a protection prompt and efficient, to be drawn chiefly from the united resources of the American colonists, against the encroachments of France and Spain, an inhabitant of Pennsylvania, describing the province of Carolina, hinted the outline of a Federal system in seventeen hundred and twenty-two.*

The Indians assembled at Albany from different parts of the continent, in all their wild and various costumes.

* "A description of the English Province of Carolina, by the Spaniards called Florida, and by the French, La Louisiane." By Daniel Coxe. The author proposes "that all the Colonies appertaining to the crown of Great Britain, on the Northern Continent of America, be united under a legal, regular, and firm establishment."

The lieutenant of the king, or supreme governor, to be appointed by him, to reside in America, and to appoint the governors of each colony, who were to be subordinate.

The council and assembly of each province were to elect annually two deputies to "a great council of the estates of the colonies," and, by the consent of the supreme governor, to meet, consult, settle, and appoint the particular quotas or proportions of money, men, &c., that each colony was to raise for their mutual defence and safety—the supreme governor having a negative. Other jurisdiction, powers, and authorities, it was intimated, might be vested in the governor and this council.

They were told, in a general speech, "We come to strengthen and brighten the chain of friendship—strong and bright so long as the sun and moon shall endure, and in the name of the Great King, our Father, and in behalf of all His Majesty's colonies, we now solemnly renew, brighten and strengthen the ancient covenant chain, and promise to keep the same inviolable and free from rust." A chain belt was delivered, representing the king, the colonies, the Six Nations, with a space for others. The French advances were then stated, and they were asked "to concert how to scatter these clouds."

The Indians complained of intrusions on their lands: "We find we are very poor. We thought we had yet land round about us, but it is said, there are writings for it all." They reminded them of "the condition of the ancient covenant chain, that they be considered with a brotherly regard." "We will take this chain belt," said Hendrick, a sachem of the Mohawks, "to Onondaga, where our council fire always burns, and keep it so securely, that neither thunder nor lightning shall break it. There we will consult over it, and add as many links more as we can." "It is true that the clouds hang heavy over us, and 'tis not very pleasant to look up, but we give you this belt to clear away all clouds, that we may all live in bright sunshine, and keep together in strict union and friendship." "You are not safe from danger one day. The French have their hatchet in their hands. We don't know but this very night they may attack us. When you came here we were very strong, you were few and weak." "We now are few and weak." "We view you as a very large tree which has taken deep root in the ground, whose branches are spread very wide. We stand by the body of this tree, and we look round to see if there be any to endeavor to hurt it, and if it should be so, that any are

powerful enough to destroy it, we are ready to fall with it." *

With such gifts as were usual, these Indians departed, waiting a summons to that war which was to precipitate their melancholy destiny. Nor were they all blind to their fate.† The commissioners, having stated the British title to these colonies, and the aggressions of the French, now considered the "plan of UNION." It proposed an act of parliament to constitute a general government for all the colonies—each to retain its present constitution, except a change might be directed,—to be administered by a President-General appointed by the crown, and a triennial grand council of deputies to be chosen by the assembly of each colony. It was to have power of war or peace with, and of purchases from the Indians; of raising soldiers and equipping fleets; of laying duties, imposts and taxes; the product to be received by a general treasurer, and subject to the president and council with a proviso that the laws it passed should not be repugnant to those of England, and not be disapproved by the king.

This plan originated with Benjamin Franklin, once a poor printer's boy, recently elevated to the important office of postmaster-general of America, who had just ‡ verified the identity of lightning and electricity, disarming it of its terrors, to which American genius has since given a quiet voice of intelligence, yet to circle the globe.

This first official plan of a general UNION of the Provinces, neither acceptable to the crown nor to the colo-

* Doc. Hist. of N. Y., ii. 330.

† "One of these woodland kings, who chalked out a sketch of the interior forests, rivers, and lakes, with a clear discernment of their relations, dropped the jealous but judicious observation, that Louisburgh was one key of the inland country, and New York another, and that the power which had both, would open the great chest and have Indians and all."—*Smith*, ii. 181.

‡ 1752.

nies, failed; and England commenced a war with France, relying for aid on the separate provincial assemblies.

Deeply interested as New York was in its result, liberal in her supplies, and zealous in her efforts, still the determination of her people to maintain their colonial rights was unshaken. To secure a pure unbiassed administration of justice, by giving to the judiciary an independent tenure of office, was an object worthy all her exertions, but they were in vain. A principle, the noblest feature of the British constitution, was not to be extended to colonists, however faithful or enlightened. Ministerial influence would not admit such a check. Its earnest appeal to the crown was not only rejected, but it was announced, that not merely the tenure of the office of chief justice, but the amount and payment of his salary, would be at the pleasure of the king.

The treaty of Paris in seventeen hundred sixty-three terminated this war. France ceased to be a rival on this continent. England triumphed. The colonies exulted. Both were engrossed with the present successes. France alone, looking into the future, found consolation for her losses in the assurance that, through them, the birth of an empire able to cope with her late enemy, was near.

The recent efforts of the colonies and the burthens they had incurred, ought to have given them at least a short respite from the exactions of England. But the crown reasoned, as crowned heads are wont to do, for its power and its prerogative; and it found in mercenary parliaments not unwilling tools. The power of the king had been limited by the revolution. Despotism now took refuge in the doctrine of parliamentary supremacy.

Hitherto the quarrels of government had been with each separate colony. They now assumed the comprehensive and more imposing form of a general controversy

with them all upon a great, common, vital principle. Parliament claimed the right, not merely of regulating their trade, but of levying in the colonies internal taxes.

The first official proposal to carry into effect this new doctrine originated at a MILITARY CONCLAVE. "At a COUNCIL held at the CAMP at ALEXANDRIA in Virginia on the fourteenth of April, seventeen hundred fifty-five, General Braddock, in pursuance of his instructions, proposed that 'a COMMON FUND' be established in the colonies for carrying on the services under his direction. The colonial governors present advised him of their unsuccessful efforts with the assemblies for the establishment of such a fund; gave it as their opinion that it can never be done 'without the aid of parliament;' and unanimously recommended that it should be proposed to his majesty's ministers to *find out some method of* COMPELLING them to do it." *

While this suggestion was under consideration, an act was passed, at the instance of the British West Indies, commonly called the sugar act, to stop the illicit and lucrative trade of the American colonies with the French and Spanish plantations, which the war had interrupted. The folly of this legislation was not less than its arbitrary character. This traffic was most beneficial, it being an exchange of British manufactures and of the surplus productions of the British colonies for gold and silver in bullion and other necessary articles, not interfering with any branch of British or colonial industry, but stimulating and fostering it.

Alarmed at a measure of such deep, extensive injury, and at the contemplated parliamentary taxation, the New York assembly first approached the governor, hoping he would join with them "in an endeavor to secure that

* Doc. Hist. of N. Y., ii. 378.

great badge of English liberty, of being taxed with their own consent." Petitions to the king and to each House of Parliament followed, remonstrating against the "Sugar Act," setting forth their restricted commerce, and stating the want of a paper currency, "though they had never neglected to sink their emissions;" admitting fully the power of parliament to regulate their trade, but eloquently denying its right to tax them. "An exemption from the burden of ungranted and involuntary taxes," was their language, "must be the grand principle of every free State. Without such a right vested in themselves, exclusive of all others, there can be no liberty, no happiness, no security, not even the idea of property. Life itself would become intolerable. We nobly disdain the thought of claiming that exemption as a privilege. We found it on a basis more honorable, solid and stable. We challenge it, and glory in it as our right." This emphatic declaration of their colonial rights was followed by a decisive act, the initiative of all the subsequent movements to express authoritatively the united sense of America. Though precedence in this procedure has been claimed for other colonies, it belongs to New York.

A committee of the assembly was appointed "to CORRESPOND with the other colonies, or with committees of them," in relation to the sugar act; the act restricting the emission of bills of credit; the several other acts of parliament, in relation to the trade of the northern colonies; and "on the subject of impending dangers which threaten the colonies, of being taxed by laws to be passed in Great Britain." *

* 1764, Oct. 18. This statement is appended to a Handbill issued in 1774. See N. Y. Handbills in the New York Historical Society Library. The Committees of Correspondence proposed by James Otis, were not appointed until May 31, 1765.

The question of the origin, in the colonies, of committees of correspondence has been much debated. The first was appointed by New York prior to the passage of the stamp act.

Although the assembly "rejected the thought of independence," its germ had begun to shoot. The press of New York, cautious as it had been, uttered the momentous thought, and gave it its true direction. "History," it declared, "does not furnish an instance of revolt begun by the people which did not take its rise from oppression. Nothing but this, sensibly felt, can unite the several governments in such a design, and *without* UNION they can do nothing." "The colonies may, from present weakness, submit to the impositions of ministerial power, but they will certainly hate that power as tyrannical, and, as soon as they are able, will throw it off."

Conscious of her strength, inflated with her successes, which had not only given North America to her grasp, but had laid the Indies at her feet, imperial England would scarcely pause. Unwilling longer to be withheld from so large a field of taxation, the petitions of the colonies were not read—that from New York no one could be prevailed upon to offer,* and, on the twenty-second of March, seventeen hundred sixty-five, the act was passed imposing STAMP duties, and to enforce their collection, extending the admiralty jurisdiction, and thus dispensing with the trial by jury. Odious as were the provisions of this act, it had been modified through the influence of the agent of Connecticut † so as to bear less onerously on the poor, and the period of its going into effect was postponed. Franklin saw clearly its ultimate result. "Go home," he

* Letter of Agent of New York, Feb. 9, 1765.

† Jared Ingersoll, who labored to prevent its passage.—*Hollister's Connecticut*, ii. 126.

said to him, "and tell our countrymen to get children as fast as they can." When the tidings reached New York,* her press spoke out. "If the interest of the mother country and her colonies cannot be made to coincide, if the same constitution may not take place in both, if the welfare of the mother country necessarily requires a sacrifice of the most valuable rights of the colonies—their right of making their own laws, and disposing of their own property by representatives of their own choosing—if such is really the case between Great Britain and her colonies, then the connection between them ought to cease, and sooner or later it must inevitably cease." †

"These bitter seeds are sown that will one day have their growth," writes a member of the New York assembly. "Do you like the sound of a drum?" ‡ "Depressus surgam," was the answer from Connecticut, "may, perhaps, be a proper motto for America. These severities, instead of securing, as they are intended to do, the dependency of the colonies, may perhaps fit us for, and hasten the period of a glorious INDEPENDENCE upon every thing but the blessing of Heaven, which will ever attend a virtuous, wise, industrious and modest people. It is a shrewd question which you ask me in respect to martial music. I will answer you without reserve. Various causes have quenched the natural ardor of my mind, yet the latent spark might still be awakened. My country's wrongs could rouse me readily to arms. *Now* we ought to inculcate the principles of freedom, and we may hope that *hereafter* a glorious SYSTEM of LIBERTY may arise and flourish." §

* The "terrible" news reached New York, 8th April, 1765.

† A. Freeman.

‡ Signed, J. W., (John Watts), New York, 9th June, 1765.

§ Reply Stratford, July 5th, 1765. No signature, but believed to be from Johnson. MSS. letters in possession of author.

In Connecticut the spirit of the people rose high. The "True Sons of Liberty," as they were called, met the thirteenth of January at Wallingford and resolved, that the stamp act "is unconstitutional and intended to enslave the true subjects of America—we will oppose the same to the last extremity—*even to take the field.* We will meet on the third of February, to consult what is best to be done, to defend our liberties and properties.*

These suggestions soon ripened into acts. The onward impulse of New York was felt. At the instance of James Otis, warm, intrepid, and sagacious, circular letters were addressed from Boston on the last day of May to each of the colonies, inviting them to meet in a congress of deputies to be held at New York in the coming October. The alarm spread far and wide. Every colony was in commotion—every interest in clamor. "It is the first step," said the land owners of New York, "a land tax for all America will be thought of next." "We have a natural right," her merchants exclaimed, as they surveyed her spacious bay, "to every freedom of trade of the English." To the churchman's exhortation of loyalty to the "Lord's anointed," the Presbyterian patriot answered, "The people are the 'Lord's anointed.' Though called 'mob and rabble,' the people are the darling of Providence." †

The people now arose, and from every seaport came popular menace or outbreak. The stamps were scattered as with a whirlwind—the stamp offices destroyed—the stamp officers compelled to resign.‡ The people of New

* Connect. Hist. Coll., 256.

† New York Weekly Gazette.

‡ In Boston, masked men attacked the stamp office. In Newport, men without disguises destroyed it, and drove the customs' collector, for refuge, to an armed vessel in the harbor. At Norwich and New London the stamps were scattered in fragments, the fort at New London firing a salute.

York, now far in the lead, denying the whole legislative power of parliament over the colonies, and vociferating "Union." *

On the seventh of October, seventeen hundred sixty-five, the first Congress of the colonies assembled in that city, and, after careful debate, passed declaratory resolutions, insisting upon the right of trial by jury as opposed to the recently extended admiralty jurisdiction, and on their immunity from taxation, except with the consent of their respective assemblies, as "their inherent rights and liberties." A memorial to the House of Lords was also framed, and a representation to the Commons, admitting their "due subordination" to parliament, its right to legislate in amendments of the common law, and in the regulation of trade, but denying that of imposing taxes.

The stamp act was to take effect on the first of November, and the meeting of this Congress had been deferred to the latest moment, hoping the act might not be enforced. No such intelligence was received, and on the last night of October, doubting the firmness of the leading gazette, placards were issued in New York, threatening the printer, in case its issue was discontinued for want of a stamp, with personal violence. He obeyed the mandate.

On the same day, while that city was occupied by British troops, and the guns of armed vessels were bearing upon it, a public meeting was held, and resolutions were passed to prevent the distribution of the stamps, and to form non-importation associations. Two hundred merchants signed the agreement, and a committee was raised of correspondence with the other colonies inviting them to unite in this self-denying league. It was a noble

* "Join or Die" was the motto of a newspaper at this time first issued by the opposition, entitled "The *Constitutional* Courant."

example of sacrifice of private interests to the public weal.

The next day New York was in tumult. The prudence of the city had spoken,—its passion began to act. The sailors left the shipping. The people rose in mass with Sears* at their head, and not a stamp was to be used under the penalty of instant popular resentment. The alarmed governor retired to the fort, and at night, in presence of his soldiers, his carriages were burned—the house of a British officer sacked—the colors of his regiment borne away. The governor complied, gave public notice that the stamps would not be issued, but being distrusted, he was obliged to deliver them to the custody of the mayor. Then quiet was restored.

Soon after, a large meeting of the freemen of the city called upon the assembly to state the grievances under which they labored. Within a few days the assembly met. A petition to Parliament was adopted, following the language of the late Congress; and resolutions were passed denouncing in unmeasured terms the obnoxious law —the extension of the admiralty jurisdiction to cases foreign to it and triable by jury, the recent mutiny or billeting act, which required the colonies to support the troops quartered there, and the restriction on their emission of paper money. They also formally resolved to defer the vote of supply to the troops.

In England, the determined attitude of the colonies had not been anticipated by the government. The non-importation agreements came with the force of lightning upon her manufacturing towns. The Commons were besieged with their petitions. In the person of Pitt, the majesty of the people rose above majesty itself, and ere a year from its passage had worn away, the stamp act

* Popularly called "King Sears."

was repealed. This great concession was welcomed in every form of gratulation throughout the colonies.

There was a lull in the great storm. The clouds were scattered, but it was only to gather and break in denser masses. The patriot press was the great lever of Freedom. In it, the claim to tax even by regulations of trade was questioned, and the language of the opposition in parliament was quoted in support of this larger view The assembly of New York again met in the ensuing summer.* Obeying the popular request, an equestrian statue was voted to the king, and one of brass to the great, idolized commoner. The claim of the obnoxious governor of reparation for the injuries of the mob, was disregarded, that of the officer granted. A requisition to supply the troops was again formally made. The assembly was not prepared to meet the case. They resolved that the supply of troops in barracks was the office of the crown—as there were barracks, that "the application to them appears unnecessary"—there was an unexpended balance of former appropriations, and part of this might be used for one year, excluding some of the articles required by the act. Thus a formal compliance with the requisition was avoided. The bill was consequently rejected by the crown, and compulsion by force was recommended by the governor as the only remedy.

At a session of the assembly in the autumn,† after two prorogations, they were informed of the negation of the supply bill, and admonished of their duty. "I am ordered," said the new governor, "to signify to you, that it is the indispensable duty of the king's subjects in America, to obey the acts of the Legislature of Great Britain. The king both expects and requires a due and cheerful obedience to the same. I flatter myself that on a due con-

* 1766. † Nov. 17.

sideration of this letter, no difficulties can properly arise, or the least objection be made, to the provision for the troops, as required by the act of Parliament."* The assembly answered, that they understood the law as only referring to soldiers when "on the march;" that in the previous vote they had contributed more than had been imposed on any other colony; that they were willing to support his majesty's government as is most suitable to the circumstances of the people they represent; and said, "We cannot consent, with our duty to our constituents, to put it in the power of any person (whatever confidence we may have in his prudence and integrity,) to lay such burthens on them." This determined attitude was followed by another prorogation.

While the question had assumed this grave form, the public feeling of the eastern and middle colonies was aroused by a discussion of intense interest. As early as the reign of Anne, the project of establishing an episcopate in America had been contemplated. It was supposed that the good humor consequent on the repeal of the stamp act might warrant the experiment, and a sermon of an English bishop,† indicating its policy, was now received in America. To a vast population of Dissenters, nothing could be more offensive. The press teemed. The Episcopal clergy of New York banded together in its advocacy. The gauntlet was taken up. The dangers and arrogance of a prelacy were depicted. An endowed mitre, with a dependent and controlled clergy, were but the prelude to an Established Church. Ecclesiastical courts will follow. Where would religious freedom next take refuge? No greater error can be committed than to undervalue the power of religious sentiment in this great revolution. The rights of dissent were at its foun-

* Holt's Journal, 1247. † Bishop of Landaff.

dation. And thus it was, that in this discussion, an acrimony much sharper than all the aggressions of the crown had caused, was shown; and, ere its close, that the first open declaration and prophecy of a near INDEPENDENCE was uttered.

"Courage, Americans," said the American Whig, "liberty, religion, and sciences are on the wing to these shores. The finger of God points out a mighty empire to your sons. The savages of the wilderness were never expelled to make room for IDOLATERS and SLAVES. The land we possess is the gift of Heaven to our fathers, and Divine Providence seems to have decreed it to our latest posterity. The day dawns, in which the foundation of this mighty empire is to be laid, by the establishment of a regular AMERICAN CONSTITUTION. All that has hitherto been done seems to be little beside the collection of materials for this glorious fabric. 'Tis time to put them together. The transfer of the European family is so vast, and our growth so swift, that before seven years roll over our heads, the first stone must be laid." *

Ere this prophecy was made public, England had taken the decisive step. In these her palmy days of power, never was more obvious the weakness of her foresight.

The great "guerdon" of the late war she thought was near, not seeing that "the thin spun life" of her colonial empire was soon to end. Townshend, the premier, as "a blind fury" applied "the shears." †

New York was in a state of rebellion. Her dependence must be secured. The majesty and authority of

* American Whig, No. V., April 11, 1768; begun March 14, 1768, in N. Y. Weekly Gazette. These essays were by William Livingston, afterwards Governor of New Jersey.—*Life by Theodore Sedgwick*, 145.

† Milton.

the government must be maintained. At his strong instance, a bill was passed, in May, sixty-seven, imposing duties, in America, on glass, red and white lead, painters' colors and paper, and three-pence a pound on tea. Thus the colonist was to behold in the light that penetrated his abode, in every color that reached his eye, in every page that recorded his thoughts, at his favored social meal, the outstretched hand of a master. The preamble of the bill declared its object—to raise a revenue in America. An act followed, establishing at Boston a Board of Commissioners of Customs, with powers, similar to those in England, of search and seizure, to be paid, out of the revenue thus collected, stipends at the pleasure of the king. A third act SUSPENDED the functions of the New York assembly until they should submit to the requirements of the mutiny act.

Massachusetts, a year before, had granted her usual supply to the troops.* New York, under the ban, gave way.†

The "Sons of Liberty" had dissolved their association. But her PRESS was not silent. The great principle of taxation and representation was argued; and, in aid, a light broke forth from Pennsylvania, as bright as it was unexpected. "The Farmer's Letters," first printed there, were reprinted widely; and Boston, in a town meeting, gave the author ‡ a vote of thanks. The first number was devoted to an exposure of the tyranny towards New York. The act restraining her legislation was pronounced a parliamentary assertion of the supreme authority of the British Legislature over the colonies in the matter of taxation. Had England meant less, the crown, by its pre-

* February, 1767. † February, 1768.

‡ To John Dickinson, March 24, 1768. A reply, in part, was published in London by Lord Granville.

rogative, could have restrained the governor from convening the assembly. In the after letters, her right to raise a revenue from them in any form was denied; but that of regulating their trade acknowledged. A resort to force was hypothetically indicated.

Amid all the excitement of these discussions, the New York assembly, having been dissolved, a new election was held, and an assembly was returned not less zealous than that which they succeeded. The merchants of New York now met again, and relying on their previous success, entered into a non-importation agreement, which a few months after was renewed. At the same moment, Massachusetts having already remonstrated and petitioned, as did Virginia and South Carolina, Boston invited a convention of the towns, and passed a vote that each man provide himself with arms and ammunition. For the commissioners of customs had left Boston in a fright, and a guard of soldiers was stationed, and cannon were pointed toward the usual place of legislation.

In the last month of this year, the new assembly of New York, with all these scenes before it, evinced a spirit worthy the occasion. They asserted the right of petition as equally belonging to their body as to the House of Commons; that the colony lawfully and constitutionally has and enjoys an "internal legislature of its own, in which the crown and people of the colony are constitutionally represented; and that the power and authority of legislation cannot lawfully or constitutionally be suspended, abridged, abrogated, or annulled by any power, authority or prerogative whatever." They averred their right to *correspond* and *consult with other subjects out of the colony, or in other parts of the realm, either individually or collectively*, on any matter wherein their rights or interests, or those of their constituents are or may be af-

fected; and they appointed a *committee of correspondence* to report its transactions to subsequent meetings of the House. Petitions were also preferred to the king, to the Lords and to the Commons, pronouncing the late acts imposing duties, "with the sole view and express purpose of raising a revenue, utterly subversive of their constitutional rights, because as they neither are, nor, from their peculiar circumstances, can be represented in parliament, their property is granted away without their consent." Next, they remonstrated against the act suspending their functions.

The governor pronounced their resolutions "flatly repugnant to the laws of Great Britain;" and punished them by a dissolution.* The recent declaration of the British prime minister, "I will never think of repealing the late act of Parliament securing to us a revenue, until I see America prostrate at my feet;" and the recent increase of troops ordered to Boston, assured him his conduct would be approved.

A new election was now held. In the city a leading handbill was issued, protesting, that not a sufficient number of "dissenters" was included in the representation, but the churchmen prevailed.

On the fourth of April the new assembly met. The governor urged in a special message, that the old mode of appointing an agent to Great Britain by the governor, council and assembly, be restored.

The assembly, in order to have the influence of public opinion, the debates being with closed doors, resolved that their votes and proceedings be printed and made public. And on the first day of the session they appointed a grand committee of grievances—a grand committee on courts of justice—a grand committee on trade.

* January 2, 1769.

Four days after, Philip Schuyler, whose bold, determined spirit had been infused into the previous assembly, moved, "as their repeated resolves and applications had not been attended with success," and with a view "to restore lasting harmony," that a day be fixed to take into consideration the state of the colony; and for the appointment of special agents. He then reported an address, insisting upon the appointment of agents by the assembly alone; stated "that the sums granted for the support of the troops were very considerable, and that the governor's requisition demands the most serious consideration;" lamented the decay of trade, and urged the emission of a paper currency.

To check the executive influence, he also moved, that no person "holding any office of honor, trust or profit," should sit as a member of that body. Resolutions were next passed, asserting the sole right of imposing taxes, that of petition, of trial by jury, and that the sending of persons for trial to places beyond the sea was "highly derogatory to the rights of British subjects." The indocile temper of the assembly indicating to the governor that a longer session would only the more exhibit his weakness, he forthwith prorogued it for a few weeks,* which prorogation was extended, and it did not again meet until late in the autumn.

Thus far, the experiment of coercion had been unsuccessful. The cabinet of England felt the pressure of public opinion and were considering a retreat. To soothe the colonies, a circular was sent forth giving promise of a change of policy.

Meantime Virginia responded to the resolutions of New York in like emphatic terms, and Massachusetts approved, remonstrating pointedly against the presence of

* May 20, 1769.

an armed force within her borders, and avowing her determination never to make provision for the troops.

The merchants of New York, seeing in these proceedings little promise of beneficial results, now determined to appeal more strongly to the interests of England. They passed resolutions that the non-importation agreements, then only referring to the glass and tea bill, should endure until ALL the obnoxious revenue laws were repealed. In this Boston for a time concurred, but Philadelphia, taking a less enlarged view, adhered to the terms of the original stipulation.

The assembly of New York again met in November.* The governor intimated the probability of a repeal of the revenue acts, and a bill was introduced for the issue of bills of credit to be loaned for a term of years, the proceeds to be applied to discharge the debts and to meet the exigencies of the colony.

The motives to it were the great scarcity of specie, caused by the interdiction of traffic with the foreign West Indies, and the total absence of a paper currency, reducing values, preventing remittances to England, and obstructing a provision for the public service. The bill passed and received the sanction of Colden, the lieutenant-governor.

It was not acceptable to the British ministry until Colden explained it. These bills, he informed them, were not made a legal tender except at the treasury and at the loan offices. "It is a consideration of some importance to the government, that, as the interest money cannot be applied without the consent of the governor, the supply for the troops quartered in this place, may for the future be secured, which has at all times met with opposition in the assembly, and has been with difficulty obtained." †

* 1769. † Colden to Hillsborough, February 21, 1770.

Thus enlightened on the policy of the measure, parliament passed an act sanctioning the emission. The ministry were also informed that the recent act declaring the judges and other officers of government ineligible to the assembly, had been so amended as to confine the exclusion to the judges, which had been repeatedly urged.

Another measure was taken at this time of general interest. In his speech to the assembly, stating that his majesty had been pleased to direct that the regulation of the trade with the Indian nations would be in future left to the colonies; Colden urged that the consideration of this subject be resumed.

The assembly promised so to do, and "to frame such laws as will answer his majesty's most gracious intention," confirm the friendship and secure the affections of the Indian nations. Soon after a resolution was adopted that the Legislature cannot pass a law that will fully answer, without the harmonious co-operation of the other colonies; that the most proper step is to appoint commissioners to meet others who may be appointed by the neighboring colonies, to fix on a general plan for the regulation of the Indian trade; "that laws may afterwards be passed conformable thereto." In this view, an act passed appointing commissioners of conference. Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Quebec, appointed like commissioners. "I now suspect," Colden wrote, "the commissioners will not meet, or not agree upon any one plan, by reason of the different interests of the different colonies." * They never met.

This subject was not resumed; fast growing exigencies pointing the attention of the colonies to larger objects. Though engrossed by these, the prominence of this interest in the public mind, now sunk into insignificance, was markedly shown at a subsequent period.

* July 7, 1770.

This procedure has been interpreted into a measure for the establishment of a union of the colonies. The statement is not sustained by the records.

Soothed by the permission to emit paper money, for without it the affairs of New York were at a stand, the assembly was asked to vote a supply to the troops. The conflict of opinion was high. Some in despite of the suspending act advocated an absolute refusal—others were for a middle course—to vote the supply without recognizing the obligation. The chief justice and several of the council, dependents of the crown, came into the House, and after much entreaty, by a majority of two votes, a small aid was granted without any preamble to the bill, or the least reference in terms to the mutiny or suspending acts. Yet this body had formally approved the resolutions of Virginia, and had voted thanks to the merchants for their adherence to the non-importation pact.

An appeal was now openly made from the assembly to the people. Two days after this vote,* an address, over the signature of "A Son of Liberty to the Betrayed Inhabitants of the City of New York," appeared. It stigmatized the grant to the troops as an admission of the authority that enacted the revenue laws. In this point of view, Massachusetts and South Carolina had condemned them. Was this a grateful return to the former for their sympathy as to the suspending act? No. It is betraying the common cause of liberty. Can there be a greater farce to impose on the people than to vote thanks to the merchants for their non-importation agreement, and at the same time to "counteract it by countenancing British acts, and complying with ministerial requisitions incompatible with our freedom?" What is more grievous, this grant

* December 17, 1769.

is "to support troops kept here, not to protect, but to enslave us. The assembly is flattered with the success of a bill to emit paper money when it is known only to be a snare, for it will not obtain the royal assent." The address then charged a political coalition, and advised a meeting in the fields, that they should go thence in a body to their representatives and insist upon their joining the minority. If they refuse, send the tidings to every assembly on the continent, and publish them to the world.

This bold rebuke was presented to the assembly by the speaker, and a resolution was passed declaring it "an infamous and seditious libel." In a vote of a full house Philip Schuyler stood alone in the negative.* The next day, at his instance, EDMUND BURKE was appointed the agent of New York; and a motion made by him, that all elections of representatives in the assembly should be by ballot, was carried. This was but a momentary triumph. The ultra royalists rallied, and, though a public meeting † urged "the inestimable privilege," the measure was finally defeated.

With a pliant majority in an assembly elected for seven years, the ministerial party felt secure of their ascendency, and boasted their strength.

The rabble, as the active patriots were called, were now openly derided; and the soldiery, justly regarding as a triumph the recent vote for their support, and galled by the recollection of their past humiliation, gave vent to their feelings. "The Liberty Pole shall DOWN," was the cry of the soldiers.

Under cover of night a party of them attempted to blow it up. A few citizens interfering, the soldiers, abandoning their purpose for the present, assailed them and were resisted. Attempts on the pole were repeated, and

* 20 to 1. † The leaders were Sears, McDougall, Lamb.

at last, though sentinels of the citizens had been stationed around it, succeeded.

A public meeting was immediately called by the Sons of Liberty, "Soldiers found at night with arms, or out of their baracks," were denounced as "enemies to the people," and a solemn engagement was formed to bring the first offender to justice.

The sailors now rushed from the wharves and from the ships. Successive affrays took place, until, after a fight on "Golden Hill," a tardy order from the mayor brought the troops to obedience. "The Liberty Pole shall STAND," was the cry of the triumphant people. To quiet them, a right of property in it with a plot of ground was bought, and, after being drawn in procession, decorated with flags and ribbons, a tall mast was raised amid cheers and shouts, cased with iron and surmounted by a vane, with the words inscribed in bold characters—"Liberty and Property."

"The persons engaged in these riots," Colden writes to the ministry, "consist chiefly of Dissenters, who are very numerous, especially in the country, and have a great influence on the country members of assembly. The most active among them are Independents from New England or educated there, and of republican principles."

The excitement of the people was not permitted to subside. The recent vote of the assembly as to the alleged "libel" was believed to warrant an attempt to intimidate the press, and a proclamation was issued for the discovery of the author. Captain Alexander McDougall, to whom it was traced, was arrested, and refusing to give bail, was committed to prison. Upon his arrest he exclaimed, "I rejoice that I am the first to suffer for liberty since the commencement of our glorious struggles."

This native of the lone Hebrides, who, with the perse-

verance of a Scot, had, as a sailor, made his way to fortune, nursing, in his life of perils on the ocean, the faith and education of his far home, was not to be dismayed. From "the new jail," again and again he addressed the people through the press, sustaining his charges and vindicating his opposition. When oppression becomes personified it loses half its dangers. Public sympathy is then awakened, directed, concentrated. The imprisoned sailor was deemed the true type of an imprisoned commerce.

To soften the rigors of his confinement, to evince a detestation of its authors, and in his person to plead the public wrongs, became a duty of patriotism. On the anniversary of the repeal of the stamp act, his health was drank with honors, and the meeting, in procession, visited him in his prison. Ladies of distinction daily thronged there. Popular songs were written and sung under his prison bars, and emblematic swords were worn. His name was upon every lip. The character of each individual conspicuous in the great controversy became a subject of comment, and the applause which followed the name of Schuyler, gave a new value to the popularity his firmness had acquired.

McDougall was one of the people, and at a time when aristocratic feelings were prevalent, the importance attached to an individual of obscure birth, elevated the commonalty above artificial distinctions, and commended to the aspiring spirits of the day the lesson of resistance.

The servile instruments of the government added new causes of dissatisfaction. After an imprisonment of three months a grand-jury was packed, composed of the dependents of the governor. De Lancey, the leader of the loyalists who had been denounced in the address, and De Noyelles, another member of the House who had moved his arrest, took their seats with the court, and

yielding to this influence, an indictment was found against him.

This persecution, the more odious because under the form of law, produced its natural effects. The intelligence of these occurrences the more quickened the pulse of Boston. The affrays with the soldiers here taught them what to fear, the courage of McDougall what to dare.

Ere the murmurs and applauses of its townsfolk at the events in New York had ceased, Boston became a scene of blood. The people would no longer brook the insults of the soldiers. Defiances were given. Sneers and taunts provoked to blows. The soldiers discharged their pieces among a crowd in a public street. Several townsmen were wounded, a few killed. The bells rang. The old Boston drums beat the alarm. "The troops must to their barracks," was the universal cry. A town meeting was called. In flocked their neighbors—Samuel Adams, a humble but educated man, now their fearless leader, confronted the royal governor. The departure of the troops was demanded, insisted upon, compelled. They retired from the town. The "Boston massacre," * was in the ear of every colonist far and near.

Though the question of British monarchy in America was now solved, no solution of it yet appeared. Addresses, petitions, remonstrances—all had failed; and the only effective, peaceful resistance was about to be relin quished.

The merchants of New York had to this hour remained true to their engagements, although their warehouses were empty and their harbor deserted. It would seem as though they had seen in the future the buoyant glories of this metropolis, and felt that theirs was a mis-

* March 5, 1770.

sion of free trade to the whole world. But while they were faithful to the great sacrifice, elsewhere it was disregarded. Their isolated constancy was unavailing, and they proposed the importation of every dutied article except tea; thus, by this reservation, to save the principle. The towns which latest had adopted the non-importation agreement and first had violated it, rejected the proposal. The Sons of Liberty in New York uttered threats towards the merchants, but the impoverished city could no longer hold out. Orders were given for full cargoes of all they wanted except teas; and the voluntary resistance seemed at an end. Philadelphia and Boston soon followed the example.

This was the time for conciliation. But to the king, who felt not, amid his royalties, the advancing spirit of the age, resistance to oppression was an enigma only to be solved by the sword, and thus the solution was to come. At the moment when the relinquishment of the commercial opposition was known at St. James, an order appeared making Boston the rendezvous of the armed vessels stationed in North America, and directing its fortress, Castle William, to be occupied by the king's troops.

Massachusetts was not yet prepared to meet this breach of her charter and insulting parade of power.

On the eleventh of December,* the New York assembly was again convened, Lord Dunmore having opened the new seals as governor. Two days after, upon a warrant of the speaker, McDougall appeared at the bar of the House. Being asked if he was the author of the "libellous" address, he answered, that he had been arrested, indicted, and held to bail, under the order of the assembly, and his trial had been delayed. "Who were his accusers?" De Noyelles demanded a categorical reply to the

* 1770.

question. Attempting to state his position, McDougall was threatened to be committed for contempt. George Clinton interposed. McDougall waived an answer, for the reason that, being under trial for the imputed offence, there was no precedent for the procedure of the House. The loyal member again demanded an answer, threatening him with the infliction of "peine forte et dure." Clinton again interposed, but in vain. McDougall was required to ask pardon. His spirit was too firm to be intimidated by this brutal threat. The stout patriot answered: "Rather than resign the rights and privileges of a British subject, I would suffer my right hand to be cut off at the bar of the House. I will not ask pardon, for I have not committed any crime." He was remanded to the jail, whence he again set forth his wrongs to the people. A writ of habeas corpus was granted. The House directed the judges to take notice that he was imprisoned under their warrant, and that the sheriff must detain him. Warm debates arose. No record of the decision remains, but ere long McDougall was at large.

All was now quiet in this province. But to insure, if necessary, an unquestioning obedience, Dunmore * with loaded pockets was transferred to Virginia, and Tryon with loaded arms, and laurels still bloody, won in unequal battle with his fellow-subjects in North Carolina, was received by the now abject councils of New York with welcome greetings. In January seventy-two, its assembly again met, and the emission bill having been approved by the crown, again voted a supply to the troops.

The colony felt that England had placed it in charge of an unscrupulous, heartless tyrant, and trembled before his presence.

No public voice of reprobation was any longer heard.

* July, 1771.

In the dark, discontented looks of the people there was a boding; but it is a significant fact, that from the time of McDougall's liberation, excepting as to a renewed proposal of an American episcopate, the press of this colony was silent.

It was during this sullen calm, that Hamilton, a youth, departing from the West Indies, arrived on the shore of this great continent, at the very moment, pictured as the future "asylum of freedom." *

* "The Western World," Burke wrote, "was the seat of freedom until another more western was discovered, and that other will probably be its asylum when it is limited down in every other part. Happy is it that the worst of times may have one refuge still left for humanity!"—*Annual Register*, 1772.

CHAPTER II.

Nevis, one of a cluster of the Antilles, was his birthplace. This small island, which rises like a cone from the ocean to a great height, is supposed to have been so called by Columbus, from its resemblance in form and its volcanic discharges to an elevation in Spain, known as the mountain of "Snows." Watered with salubrious springs and rivulets from its base to its summit, it presents in its successive acclivities the luxuriance of the tropics and the growths of the temperate zone. First occupied by the English, the little colony never passed from their sway, and, owing to the paternal cares of its earliest governor, was a model of virtue, order and piety.* This beautiful spot was the quiet abode of Hamilton's infancy.

His father was a native of Scotland, who looked back upon his ancestry with pride, tracing his lineage in a direct line to Bernard, a near kinsman of Rollo, the first duke of Normandy, and progenitor of William the Conqueror. Of the proud and warlike family of Hamilton, conspicuous throughout the history of Scotland and England, he was of the Cambuskeith branch, the head

* History of West Indies, by Thomas Coke, LL. D. Histoire Philosophique et Politique des etablisemens et du commerce des Europeans dans les deux Indes.—*Par Raynal*, vii. 376.

of which was Walter, son of the first Sir David de Hamilton, Lord of Cadyow.*

His grandfather, Alexander Hamilton of Grange, the fourteenth in descent, married, about seventeen hundred and thirty, Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Sir Robert Pollock, and had a numerous issue, of whom James, his fourth son, was the father of the American Hamilton.

With a just value of the advantages of birth, and a proper disregard of family pretensions, he wrote to a near friend, "Thus my blood is as good as that of those who plume themselves upon their ancestry."

His father being bred a merchant, and the West Indies opening a field to enterprise, he left Scotland for St. Christopher's, where, though at first successful, through a too generous, easy temper, he failed in business, and was, during the greater part of his life, in reduced circumstances.

On his mother's side, Hamilton's descent was French. His maternal grandfather, whose name was Faucette, was a Huguenot, a race to which America owes many of her most illustrious sons, who, in different climes, proved how warmly they had cherished the virtuous and determined spirit of their exiled forefathers.

In the general expatriation of his Protestant countrymen which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he settled in Nevis, where he practised medicine. He was a man of letters and polished manners.

Hamilton was the offspring of a second marriage. His mother's first husband was a Dane, named Lavine, who, attracted by her beauty, and recommended to her

* "Historical and Genealogical Memoirs of the House of Hamilton, with Genealogical Memoirs of the Several Branches of the Family;" by John Anderson. Edinburgh, 1825. Appendix A. Geneology.

mother by his wealth, received her hand against her inclination.

The marriage proving unhappy, she obtained a divorce, and subsequently married the father of Alexander, to whom she gave birth on the eleventh of January, seventeen hundred and fifty-seven.

His mother died during his childhood, a woman of superior intellect, elevated sentiment, and unusual grace of person and manner. To her he was indebted for his genius.

After her decease, the misfortunes of her husband threw their only surviving child upon the bounty of his mother's relations who resided at Santa Cruz, where he received the rudiments of his education, commencing at a tender age. As an instance of which, rarely as he alluded to his personal history, he mentioned with a smile, his having been taught to repeat the decalogue in Hebrew, at the school of a Jewess, when so small that he was placed standing by her side upon a table.

There is reason to believe, from the low state of education in the West Indies, that the circle of his youthful studies was very limited, probably embracing little more than the English and French languages, which he wrote and spoke with fluency. With a strong propensity to literature, he early became a lover of books; and the time that other youths devote to classical learning, was by him employed in miscellaneous reading, happily directed by the advice of Doctor Knox, a respectable Presbyterian divine, who, delighted with the precocity of his mind, took a deep interest in its development.

The fervent piety of this gentleman gave a strong religious bias to his feelings, the topics of their conversation opening to him a glimpse of those polemical controversies which have called forth the highest efforts of intellect.

In the autumn of seventeen hundred sixty-nine, he was placed in the counting-house of Nicholas Cruger, an opulent and worthy merchant then residing at Santa Cruz. Foreign as such an avocation was to his inclinations, he nevertheless gave to it his characteristic assiduity. But his inward promptings looked far beyond the desk. He thought of immortality; and fondly contemplated from his island home those fields of glory and summits of honor which opened themselves to his imagination from beyond the deep.

A letter written at this time to his schoolfellow, Edward Stevens, then in New York, shows his aspirations.

St. Croix, Nov. 11th, 1769.

DEAR EDWARD,

This serves to acknowledge the receipt of yours per Capt. Lowndes, which was delivered me yesterday. The truth of Capt. Lightbowen and Lowndes' information is now verified by the presence of your father and sister, for whose safe arrival I pray, and that they may convey that satisfaction to your soul, that must naturally flow from the sight of absent friends in health; and shall for news this way, refer you to them.

As to what you say, respecting your soon having the happiness of seeing us all, I wish for an accomplishment of your hopes, provided they are concomitant with your welfare, otherwise not; though doubt whether I shall be present or not, for to confess my weakness, Ned, my ambition is prevalent, so that I contemn the grovelling condition of a clerk, or the like, to which my fortune condemns me, and would willingly risk my life, though not my character, to exalt my station. I am confident, Ned, that my youth excludes me from any hopes of immediate preferment, nor do I desire it; but I mean to prepare the

way for futurity. I'm no philosopher, you see, and may be justly said to build castles in the air; my folly makes me ashamed, and beg you'll conceal it; yet, Neddy, we have seen such schemes successful, when the projector is constant. I shall conclude by saying, I wish there was a war.

I am,
Dear Edward,
Yours,
ALEX. HAMILTON.

P. S. I this moment received yours by William Smith, and pleased to see you give such close application to study.

Such was his aptitude for business and his advance in the confidence of his principal, that in his thirteenth year he was left by Mr. Cruger, who made a visit to New York, at the head of his establishment. His letters of this period, preserved in the books of his employer, written to various persons, evince a capacity and prudence which show that this unusual trust was not misplaced.*

This occupation proved a great and lasting benefit to him. Amid his various engagements in later years he adverted to it as the most useful part of his education. The little leisure his mercantile duties left him was well employed. His knowledge of mathematics was increased; he became fond of chemistry, and in after life urged its study.

Occasionally he read works upon ethics, but his favorite authors were Pope and Plutarch, on the latter of which there remain some curious observations from his youthful pen.

He frequently, also, exercised himself in composition,

* Hamilton's Works, I., 2, 3.

chiefly on moral topics, to which, at a later period, he resorted as a relaxation.

This talent decided his fortunes. In August seventeen hundred seventy-two, soon after he had returned from a commercial errand to St. Eustatia, the Leeward Islands were visited by a terrific hurricane. Before its terrors had worn off, and while its desolating effects were still visible, a description of it which appeared in the neighboring island of St. Christophers,* attracted general attention at St. Croix. Curiosity was awakened, and it was traced to Hamilton. His wishes being consulted, it was determined to send him to New York to complete his education. It is related that on his voyage the vessel took fire, which was with difficulty extinguished. He arrived at Boston in October seventy-two, and proceeded to New York, where, through the kindness of his friend, Dr. Knox, he was introduced to Doctors Rogers, Mason, and other gentlemen of distinction.

Funds were provided by his relations, and he joined a grammar school at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, established under the patronage of Governor Livingston and Mr. Boudinot, of whose families he became a frequent inmate.

The principal of it was Francis Barber, an estimable man, who, full of Greek and Roman lore, fired by the prospect of distinction, broke up his school at the beginning of the Revolution, and entered the army. Rising to the rank of colonel, he was often and much distinguished. Among Hamilton's schoolfellows were Jonathan Dayton, afterwards speaker of the House of Representatives; Brockholst Livingston, subsequently a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, and others who became of note.

* In Tiebout's paper, as stated. Five hundred houses were blown down in Santa Cruz.

Here his industry kept pace with his wider prospects. During the winter, while at the house of the governor, he frequently, wrapt in a blanket, labored until midnight, and in summer would resort at dawn to the quiet of a near cemetery, where he was often seen preparing his lessons for the day.

His habits of composition were continued. An elegy by him on the death of a young lady in whose family he was intimate, was remembered as possessing merit. He also composed a prologue and epilogue for a play which was performed by the officers of a body of British soldiers stationed in the vicinity. His friend, Mr. Boudinot, having lost an infant, he sat up to watch the corpse the night prior to its interment, and, during this gloomy office of friendship, wrote consolatory verses which were presented to its mother as a tribute of regard, and were long preserved with interest.

Before the end of the year he was deemed fit to enter upon his collegiate course, and after returning to New York, proceeded with Mr. Mulligan,* in whose house he lodged, on a visit to Dr. Witherspoon, the distinguished

* Hercules Mulligan, from whose written narrative many of the incidents of Hamilton's early life are derived, was a brother of Mr. Mulligan, of the firm of Kortwright and Company, to whom West India produce was consigned, to be sold and appropriated to the support of Hamilton. He had been very active in the earlier scenes of the Revolution, and outlived most of the Revolutionary race. He was chosen one of the Committee of One Hundred, and after the battle of Long Island, he, with many other whigs, left the city. A party of tories, it is related, seized him at midnight, threw a blanket over him, and carried him to New York, where he was detained. After Hamilton entered the family of Washington, Mulligan became the confidential correspondent of the commander-in-chief, furnished most important intelligence, and apprised him of a plot to seize him. When Arnold reached New York, Mulligan was seized and thrown into the Provost, in hopes of fixing on him the evidence of his having given information; but his skill was such that he was not detected. Upon the evacuation of that city, Washington complimented him by taking his first breakfast with this zealous patriot.

president of Princeton College. After a private examination, he expressed a wish to be admitted to either class which his attainments would justify, but with the condition that he might advance from class to class as rapidly as his exertions would enable him to do. This novel proposition surprised the president, and he promised to submit it to the trustees. Upon Hamilton's return to New York, an answer from the president regretted that the usages of the college forbade a compliance with his request, "inasmuch as he was convinced that the young gentleman would do honor to any seminary."

Failing in his object, he entered KINGS, now Columbia College, in the City of New York, an institution chartered by George the Second, "for the instruction of youth in the learned languages and the liberal arts and sciences," and with a large view of the future, expressly declared to be with "the good design of promoting a liberal education, and to make the same as beneficial as may be, not only to the inhabitants of the province of New York, but to all our colonies and territories in America."

Under its auspices, with the aid of a tutor, Hamilton prosecuted the plan he had marked out for himself, being received as a private student.

To his collegiate studies he soon added that of anatomy,* having entertained the idea of selecting the practice of medicine as his profession.

With his early companion Stevens, and his cherished and devoted friends, Robert Troup and Nicholas Fish, he joined a debating club, where, they relate, "he gave extraordinary displays of richness of genius and energy of mind."

"At this time," Troup writes, "the 'General' was attentive to public worship, and in the habit of praying on

* He attended the Lectures of Dr. Clossey.

his knees night and morning. I lived in the same room with him for some time, and I have often been powerfully affected by the fervor and eloquence of his prayers. He had read many of the polemical writers on religious subjects, and he was a zealous believer in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. I confess that the arguments with which he was accustomed to justify his belief, have tended in no small degree to confirm my own faith in revealed religion." *

A hymn of some merit written at this time, entitled "The soul entering into bliss," is preserved. These earnest feelings were not tinged with melancholy. Constitutionally happy, he mingled gayly with his friends, and often, as Mulligan relates, "used to sit the evening with my family, writing doggerel verses for their amusement, and was always amiable and cheerful." His talent for satire was also exercised. "John Holt," who then published a whig paper in New York, Troup relates, "had, by his zeal in the American cause, drawn upon himself the invectives of all the ministerial writers. These invectives Hamilton burlesqued in doggerel rhyme with great wit and humor. He also presented me with a manuscript of fugitive poetry, which I considered as a strong evidence of the elasticity of his genius; and have often lamented that it was lost with my books and papers during the war."

This pastime was soon to end. Grave events were approaching which would impose on the youth of America the responsibilities of manhood. Boston, about to be beleaguered, had invoked its sister towns to unite in an exposition of their wrongs, and Massachusetts was echoing throughout its borders responsive voices of discontent.

* The excellent family of the Boudinots relate that he occasionally made a family prayer in their presence.

The precedent of New York, which had brought together the Congress of sixty-five, was now followed by Virginia,* recommending intercolonial committees of correspondence, but as yet without effect.

In England, the agreement not to import tea had been more seriously felt than was anticipated. An indirect supply to America was obtained chiefly in Dutch vessels, New York thus resuming in part its former commercial relations. Of revenue from this source, not five hundred dollars had reached the coffers of the crown. The East India Company were groaning under an immense accumulation. Unable to pay their annual bonus to the government, or their private debts, they sought relief in a permission to ship their teas free of duty, wherever they could find a market. This true policy was rejected, and it was resolved to maintain the tax upon the colonies. The relief actually granted to the East India Company was a drawback of the whole of the duties on teas which should be exported by it to America. While measures were being taken, in England, by the appointment of consignees to this company to carry this plan into effect, committees of correspondence were appointed by the patriots in America to defeat it. Philadelphia was earliest in action. She denounced any abettors of its introduction as enemies to their country, and required the consignees to resign.† They yielded to the impressive command.‡

On the same day, New York and Boston took similar measures. The consignees in New York resigned their

* May, 1773. † Oct. 18, 1773.

‡ Gordon not too accurate, i. 231. The States of New York and Pennsylvania had kept to their agreement, and had used all the teas the market demanded; but there had been imported into Boston, from the beginning of 1768 to the end of 1772, not less than 2,714 chests, by more than a hundred different persons.

appointments. The persons selected to destroy the tea * were notified to be prepared, and a few days after, the association of the "Sons of Liberty" was formally reorganized. Their first act was to pass resolves similar to those of Philadelphia. To insure their execution they declared "whoever shall transgress any of them, we will not deal with, or employ, or have any connection with him." †

The day prior to this reorganization, the expected tea ship arrived in Boston. It was hoped that the firm example of New York would induce the consignees to decline their office. Not so. The governor, though alarmed, was pledged to test the question, and the consignees parleyed. The people were determined. An immense meeting resolved that the tea should not be landed—that no duty should be levied on it—meanwhile two more tea ships arrived. The expostulations with the consignees were continued. Another mass meeting was held, and at its close, at a concerted signal, a party disguised as Indians rushed to the wharf. Having stationed guards to prevent other spoliation, they went on board the vessels and threw the tea chests into the bay. The strong necessity excused this destruction of private property. Expresses forthwith came to New York and to Philadelphia. The latter formally approved the procedure. At New York, the Sons of Liberty called the citizens together. They pledged their support to the other colonies, and appointed a committee of correspondence. Tryon and the city authorities interposed with an assurance that the tea, when arrived, should be lodged in the fort, to await orders for its delivery from the council or from the king. The citizens rejected the proffer, insisting that the tea should not touch the shore.

* Nov. 29—called "Mohawks."

† Handbill. N. Y. Society Library.

The New Year opened, but no countenance came from England, no hope was held out The king was more than ever bent upon coercion. The English people were true to their allegiance and to their pride. "The colonies," was the general voice, "must be reduced to submission." Even Pitt, now Lord Chatham, pronounced against them. Late in March, a bill reciting the commotions in Boston, closing its port, directing the armed vessels stationed there to compel the departure of ships approaching its harbor, until satisfaction were made for the tea destroyed, was under debate. Fox urged with his characteristic liberal sagacity, a total repeal of the obnoxious taxes. Burke, with all his pictured eloquence, warned in prophetic tones the consequences of the measure. "This bill," exclaimed Johnston, who had lived in America, "endangers a revolt. Its effect must be to produce a general confederacy to resist the power of this country in Parliament." London merchants offered to pay the loss, were the bill suspended. Monition, entreaty, argument, were vain.

The passage of this bill preceded but a short time an act, for the impartial administration of justice in the cases of persons questioned for acts done by them in the execution of the law for the suppression of tumults or riots. It authorized the governor of a colony to order trials in other colonies or in Great Britain, and protected the prosecutors and the witnesses—and this—though the indictments were for murder. The act was to take effect in June, and to continue three years. Soon after was the act for the better regulating the government of Massachusetts bay. It invaded the charter of that colony, interdicted town meetings, except when held for the election of town officers or unless permitted by the governor, gave to him the appointment and removal of the sheriffs who were to impanel juries. Then came a law rendering

legal the quartering troops in Boston, and an act regulating the government of Quebec.

While England was enacting this comprehensive tyranny, New York fulfilled her pledge to the other colonies.

On the eighteenth of April a tea ship arrived there. The captain, informed of the determination not to permit its being landed, acquiesced, and was ordered to return. The bells gave notice of the time of his departure. A vast concourse assembled. The band played "God save the King." The ships displayed their flags. That on the liberty pole was unfurled amid a royal salute of artillery, and the captain was escorted in a pilot boat to his vessel. Thus was he to carry with him home this evidence of a deliberate public sentiment. Another ship with tea arriving, the captain denied it was on board. The hatches were opened, the chests discovered, and the "Mohawks" notified to perform their office. The people would not wait their coming, and in the presence of men of reputation, to prevent unnecessary injury, the chests of tea were cast into the water.* The indignation of this city was, soon after, shown by burning in effigy NORTH, the new premier, WEDDERBURNE and HUTCHINSON. Handbills with their coffins were distributed. The less excited of the citizens were alarmed; a meeting was called † to nominate a committee of a more moderate temper.

The next day an express arrived from Boston, bringing circular letters asking a general concert of non-importation and non-exportation to Britain. A few days

* William Backhouse to ——— in Schenectady, April 23, 1774: "He was obliged, for our peace and the safety of the ship, to give it up to the people commonly called "Liberty Boys," last night, when they hove all the tea into the river."

† May 16, 1774.

after, a meeting was held to elect a standing committee of fifty, to whom one was added. Of these some were ultra loyalists. It was hoped that New York would falter. But the proceedings of this committee were wiser than those of the popular leaders. New York had already suffered from the infidelity of other mercantile associations. She was unwilling to incur a similar risk. This committee answered Boston,* "The cause is general and concerns a whole continent, who are equally interested with you and us; and we foresee that no remedy can be of avail unless it proceeds from the joint act and approbation of all. From a virtuous and spirited union much may be expected, while the feeble efforts of a few will be attended with mischief and disappointment to themselves, and triumph to the adversaries of our liberty. Upon these reasons we conclude that a CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES, from the colonies in general, is of the utmost moment, that it ought to be assembled without delay, and some unanimous resolutions formed in this emergency, not only respecting your deplorable circumstances, but for the security of our common rights."† They paused as to the associations, from want of confidence in the observance of them elsewhere.

Three days before, Virginia had recommended an agreement among the colonies for an annual Congress, but the proposition from New York was of more direct influence. The General Assembly of Connecticut, the most popular legislative body in the colonies, now ordered a day of humiliation and prayer. They deprecated the threatening aspects of Divine Providence, as to the liberties of the people, and urged them to call upon "the God

* May 23, 1774.

† This letter to Boston is ascribed, with great probability, to John Jay.—*Life by his son*, i. 24.

of all mercies to avert His judgments." Their next steps were to order an inventory of the cannon, arms, ammunition, and military stores at New London; to appoint militia officers; to organize an artillery company in one town, and a company of grenadiers in another. Pungent resolutions were passed condemning Parliament. Donations to Boston followed.* Soon after, the city of New York called upon the interior counties of the State to appoint committees of correspondence, and proposed to Boston to name a day for the opening of the Congress, sufficiently remote to enable South Carolina to come in. The mode of electing the New York delegates to this Congress caused much excitement. SEARS proposed one list, the standing committee another. After repeated delays, a meeting in the fields was called. The ministerial party deprecated the measure, and, in the interval of doubt, proposed, as a substitute for a Congress, an address to the king, "to settle a constitution for America." They were told, "To the uncorrupted patriotism of Congress, we commit our cause—the cause of God, the cause of nature, the cause of America." †

On the sixth of July, the GREAT MEETING IN THE FIELDS was held. As to what should then be done, every heart throbbed. The loyalist trembled—the patriot cheered. Its action would be decisive.

To give effect to its proceedings, McDougall, who had declined a nomination to Congress by the standing committee—a man equal to the great crisis—was called to preside.

* Hollister, ii. 152. Windham sent two hundred and fifty fat sheep; Norwich, three hundred and ninety sheep, besides money, wheat, and corn; Weathersfield sent wheat; Western New York, a larger supply of it; Georgia, rice and specie.

† American Archives, by Force; i. 311.

Resolutions * framed by him were passed. They inveighed against the Boston Port Act. An attack upon the liberties or constitution of any of the colonies is an attack upon all. The shutting of any colonial port is highly unconstitutional, and subversive of commercial rights. If the principal colonies stop all importation from, and exportation to, Great Britain, till the Boston Port Act is repealed, it will prove the salvation of North America and her liberties. They pledged the colony to be governed by the resolutions of the contemplated Congress, recommending a convention of it, by deputies, to elect delegates to that council, and called for subscriptions in aid of Boston. If such convention were not held, the counties were asked to sanction the delegates chosen by the city of New York, a suggestion which was approved.

It was on this momentous occasion that Hamilton, then only in his seventeenth year, is stated first to have taken part in the public deliberations.

It is related to have been his habit to walk several hours each day under the shade of some large trees which stood in Batteau, now Dey street, talking to himself in an undertone of voice, apparently in deep thought.

His neighbors engaging in conversation with him, then only known as the "Young West Indian," and impressed with his opinions, urged him to address the meeting.† From this seeming intrusion, at first he recoiled. But after listening attentively to the successive speakers, and finding several points untouched, he presented himself to the assembled multitude.

The novelty of the attempt, his youthful countenance, his slender boyish form, awakened curiosity and excited attention. Overawed by the scene before him, he hesi-

* American Archives, i. 312. † Statement of Skaats.

tated and faltered; but as he proceeded, almost unconsciously, to utter his accustomed reflections, his mind warmed with the theme; his energies were recovered. After a discussion, clear, cogent, and novel, of the great principles involved in the controversy, he depicted in the glowing colors of ardent youth, the long-continued and long-endured oppressions of the mother country. Insisting upon the duty of resistance, he pointed to the means and certainty of success; and described the waves of rebellion sparkling with fire, and washing back on the shores of England the wrecks of her power, of her wealth and her glory. The breathless silence ceased as he closed; and a whispered murmur, "It is a collegian! it is a collegian!" was lost in loud expressions of wonder and applause at the extraordinary eloquence of the young stranger.

The proceedings of this assemblage were disavowed by the standing committee, and to obtain an expression of opinion that would not be disputed, a poll of the voters was ordered. The popular leaders, eager for an immediate agreement not to import, required of the candidates named by the standing committee as delegates to Congress, a pledge to favor such an agreement. Declaring their opinion, that a general non-importation agreement, faithfully observed, would prove the most efficacious means to procure a redress of grievances, they were elected.

The several colonies came into the great measure, and chose their delegates, some by the people, some by conventions, others by their assemblies. Those of New York,* on their departure for Philadelphia, were escorted

* They were James Duane, John Jay, Philip Livingston, Isaac Low, John Alsop. Suffolk appointed William Floyd; Orange, Henry Wisner and Herring; Kings, Simon Boerum.

by the citizens to the ferry, with colors flying and music playing; amid loud huzzas and assurances, that "they would support, at the risk of every thing dear," such resolutions as the Congress should adopt.

CHAPTER III.

On the appointed day, the fifth of September, the first Continental Congress was organized. Eleven colonies, Georgia not being represented, met as equals, each having one vote. The Puritan, Samuel Adams, proposed an episcopal clergyman to open their solemn duties with prayer.

All questions of relative importance, all local prejudices, all differences of religion, customs, manners, were forgotten. Never was the cause of freedom ministered to by men more worthy the great trust. From Virginia, as the eldest colony, the presiding officer was selected in the person of Peyton Randolph, whose black velvet suit marked his precedence.

The Congress first resolved "to state the rights of the colonies in general, the several instances in which those rights were violated or infringed, and the means most proper for a restoration of them." Next, "to examine and report the several statutes which affect the trade and manufactures of the colonies," not earlier than the last nine years.

While these subjects were under consideration, resolutions of Boston and its neighbors were laid before them, stating their wrongs and merely defensive measures to which they would adhere, "as long as such conduct may be vindicated by reason and the principles of self-preser-

vation, but no longer." In contemplation of the future, the collectors of their taxes had been instructed not to pay over the public moneys to the provincial treasury, and the election of officers of militia was advised; men "of sufficient capacity for that purpose, who had evidenced themselves inflexible friends to the rights of the people."

Congress unanimously approved and recommended "a perseverance in this firm and temperate conduct," trusting a change in the councils of the British nation. The merchants were urged not to order goods, and to suspend those ordered; and it was resolved, that after the first of next December there should be no importation of British goods, and no consumption of, or traffic in them. A loyal petition to the king was ordered, assuring him that by abolishing the system of laws and regulations of which the colonies complained, enumerating them, the jealousies they had caused would be removed, and harmony restored. "We ask but for peace, liberty and safety. We wish not a diminution of the prerogative, nor do we solicit the grant of any new right in our favor. Your royal authority over us, and our connection with Great Britain, we shall always carefully and zealously endeavor to support and maintain."

General Gage was entreated to discontinue the erection of the fortifications on Boston Neck, and to prevent all injuries on the part of the troops; and Massachusetts was asked "temporarily to submit to a suspension of the administration of justice where it could not be procured in a legal and peaceable manner." Persons accepting office under the recent act, changing the form of her government, were denounced, "as the wicked tools of that despotism which is preparing to destroy those rights which God, nature, and compact have given to America."

A memorial was next ordered to the inhabitants of

the British colonies there represented, exposing their common wrongs and urging a united "commercial opposition," warning them to extend their views "to mournful events," to be "in all respects prepared for every contingency, and to implore the favor of Almighty God." An appeal was made to the enlightened sympathies of the British people. "Permit us to be as free as yourselves, and we shall ever esteem a union with you to be our greatest glory and our greatest happiness; we shall ever be ready to contribute all in our power to the welfare of the empire; we shall consider your enemies as our enemies and your interests as our own." "Place us in the same situation that we were at the close of the last war, and our former harmony will be restored."

Finally, an address was made to the inhabitants of the Province of Quebec, inviting their co-operation.

In the mean time, the form of a non-exportation, non-consumption association was adopted, and signed by each of the delegates. A desire not to injure their fellow subjects in Great Britain, Ireland or the West Indies, induced them to defer a twelvemonth, as recommended by Virginia, the non-exportation thither of any commodity or merchandise, except rice to Europe. To insure an effectual observance of this covenant, committees of observation for each precinct were recommended, persons violating it to be punished as foes to American liberty. A committee of correspondence for each colony was advised, and intercourse was interdicted with any province not acceding to or violating this agreement, which was to be in force until the specified obnoxious acts were repealed.

A declaration of the rights and injuries of the colonies was made, in which the most difficult question was disposed of.

The right to participate in the legislative council of their common country, was declared to be the foundation of English liberty and of all free government. As the colonists were not represented, and from their local and other circumstances, cannot properly be represented in the British Parliament, they were entitled to a free and exclusive power of taxation in their several provincial legislatures, where their right of representation can alone be preserved in all cases of taxation and internal polity, subject only to the negative of their sovereign. But from *the necessity of the case* and a regard to the mutual interest of both countries, their cheerful *consent* was given to the operation of such acts of Parliament as were bona fide restrained to the regulation of their external commerce for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole empire to the mother country, and the commercial benefits of its respective members, excluding every idea of taxation, internal or external, for raising a revenue on the subjects in America, without their consent.

Of all these proceedings the language was that of peace, except where other language was demanded. For they approved the opposition of the inhabitants of Massachusetts Bay to the execution of the late acts of Parliament, and declared, "If these acts shall be attempted to be carried into execution by force, in such case ALL AMERICA ought to support them in their opposition," and "that seizing or attempting to seize any person in America, in order to transport such person beyond the sea for trial of offences committed within the body of a county in America, being against law, will justify, and ought to meet with, resistance and reprisal."

These were the essential resolutions. They bound the colonies to a common resistance to acts of force against all, or any one of them.

They also declared their opinion of the necessity, that another Congress should be held in the ensuing month of May, unless the redress of grievances which they had desired, was obtained before that time, and that all the colonies in North America choose deputies, as soon as possible, to attend such Congress. On the twenty-sixth of October, after a secret session of fifty-one days, this body adjourned.

The recommendations of this Congress were received with marked respect among the patriots of the colonies. A public manifestation of it was now given in Maryland. A vessel arrived at Annapolis laden with tea. The people resolved and threatened its destruction. The alarmed master sought the counsel of Charles Carroll, just beginning his long distinguished career. He advised, as the only means of quieting them, the immediate sacrifice of the property. The sails were set, the colors unfurled, and amid the exultations of the multitude, the vessel was a mass of fire.*

It would be a great achievement so to impair the influence of the self-denying ordinance of Congress as to induce its violation. This office was undertaken by the same individuals, the episcopal clergy of New York, who had distinguished themselves in their advocacy of an American episcopate, of which New York, the head-quarters of all the colonies, was to be the See. Accomplished scholars and able writers, they again entered the lists of controversy with unhesitating confidence and quickened zeal; "for the Presbyterians," they said, "were the chief instruments of all these flaming measures."

Of these loyalists, Doctor Myles Cooper, an Oxford scholar, the president of King's College, an Englishman by birth, held the first rank. Among the other clerical

* Grahame's United States, iv. 330.

gentlemen, Doctor Inglis, the father of a bishop of Nova Scotia, Doctor Seabury, subsequently bishop of Connecticut, and Doctor Chandler, were the most prominent.

Of the champions for the colonies in New York, Livingston, afterwards governor of New Jersey, and his son-in-law, John Jay, were the most conspicuous. To these was added the name of Hamilton.

His "debut as a political writer, was on the necessity and policy of destroying the tea at Boston. The tories regarded this bold measure as a most outrageous attack on private rights, and as an irrefragable proof that the Whigs aimed at nothing less than the overthrow of all law and government." "When he wrote it," Troup states, "I was his room-mate in college." *

He also kept up in Holt's Journal, a spirited attack upon the measures of the British ministry.† A more important controversy awaited him.

About a month after the adjournment of Congress, two tracts appeared, the productions of Seabury. The first bore the title of "Free Thoughts on the proceedings of the Continental Congress;" the other was entitled, "Congress Canvassed by a Westchester Farmer."

In the first, the writer, with much art, endeavors to impress the minds of the colonists with the dangers of restrictive measures; to excite the jealousy of the farmers against the merchants, alleging that the whole object was to engross a monopoly of goods;—anticipates, as the probable consequence, the closing of the port, and the suspension of justice, and remarks, with great ingenuity, on the inconsistency of a Congress, which, pretending to

* Letter of Colonel Troup, March 17, 1828.

† Jay writes to McDougall, Dec. 5, 1775: "I hope Mr. Hamilton *continues* busy. I have not received Holts paper these three months, and therefore cannot judge of the progress he makes."

protect the liberties of the people, had sanctioned the invasion of every private right, and recommended inquisitorial powers to committees, to enforce their worse than fruitless agreements; artfully directing the attention of the people to the assembly of the province, as the only legitimate and adequate medium of redress.

In the second address, the illegality of the recent elections is strongly urged; the appropriation of the proceeds of goods sold for the infraction of the restrictive associations to the use of the people of Boston, is condemned as a violation of the rights of property; the danger of territorial encroachments is strongly depicted; and displaying in full array the omnipotence of England, the chimera of a commonwealth of congresses being able to cope with the vigor of the monarchy, is powerfully ridiculed.

The wide, industrious, and gratuitous circulation of these pamphlets, inducing the belief that they had the sanction of the government, they soon became the text book of the tories, and were applauded by them as containing irrefutable arguments against the measures of the "Sons of Liberty."

The zeal with which they were extolled by the friends of government, excited loud condemnations by the popular party.

They were believed to have been the productions of a clergyman of the Church of England, who had been conspicuous in the support of the ministry. This circumstance was connected in the public mind with the recollection of the course adopted by the spiritual lords in parliament, and new feelings of quickened asperity were aroused. The efforts to introduce an episcopacy into America were recurred to, and the abject devotion displayed by some of the clerical dependents of the crown,

and their unguarded avowal of their sentiments increased the odium.

In the journal of the Whigs (as they were then called), the zealots of the day proposed that the author and publisher should be indicted for treasonable designs; and in a neighboring colony the exasperation rose so high, that, at a meeting of the county, the pamphlets were tarred and feathered, and nailed to the pillory, amid the shouts of the people. Within a fortnight after the second tract had issued from the press,* a pamphlet appeared under the title of "A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress from the Calumnies of their Enemies, in answer to a letter under the signature of A. W. Farmer; whereby his *sophistry* is exposed, his *cavils* confuted, his *artifices* detected, and his *wit* ridiculed, in a General Address to the Inhabitants of America, and a Particular Address to the Farmers of the *Province* of *New York*. Veritas magna est et prævalebit. Truth is powerful, and will prevail. New York. Printed by James Rivington. 1774."

After a just tribute to that "body, truly respectable on every account, whether we consider the characters of the men who composed it; the number and dignity of their constituents; or the important ends for which they were appointed;" the writer in the outset meets the question of the supremacy of parliament, as involving the freedom or slavery of the American people. "All men have one common original, they participate in one common nature, and consequently have one common right. No reason can be assigned why one man should exercise any power or pre-eminence over his fellow creatures more than another, unless they have voluntarily vested him with it. Since, then, Americans have not, by any

* December 15, 1774.

act of theirs, empowered the British Parliament to make laws for them, it follows they can have no just authority to do it." He insists, that representation is essential to the validity of a tax, according to the fundamental principles of the British constitution and the express conditions of the colonial charters.

In vindication of Congress, he observes, "When the political salvation of any community is depending, it is incumbent upon those who are set up as its guardians, to embrace such measures as have justice, vigor, and a probability of success to recommend them. If, instead of this, they take those measures which are in themselves feeble, and little likely to succeed; and may, through a defect of vigor, involve the community in still greater danger, they may be justly considered as its betrayers. It is not enough, in times of imminent peril, to use only possible means of preservation. Justice and sound policy dictate the use of probable means."

A defence of the principle of the restrictive measures follows, remonstrances and petitions having failed. "The obligation to a mutual intercourse, in the way of trade, is of the *imperfect* kind." Self-preservation warrants its disregard.

Though the artisans of Great Britain and Ireland "are not chargeable with any actual crime towards America, they may, in a political view, be esteemed criminal." By not preventing the wrongs, they were participants in them. But "we are ready to receive with open arms any who may be sufferers by the operation of our measures, and to recompense them with every blessing our country affords to honest industry. We will receive them as brethren, and make them sharers with us in all the advantages we are struggling for."

He next defends the policy of the restrictive opposi-

tion. In a fine train of thought he again descants on the value of freedom, but shows, in the conduct of Rome and in that of Great Britain, that the free principles of the sovereign were not extended to their "dependent provinces." "We can have no resource," he boldly affirms, "but in a restriction of our trade, or a resistance vi et armis." The improbability that England would resort to force is urged, and the certainty of her failure in such a resort eloquently shown.

In reply to arguments as to the impoverishing effects of a commercial opposition, he indicates, as necessary consequences, the encouragement of manufactures and the benefits of immigration produced by the loss of the American market, resulting in the "rapid growth of domestic resources which would place the country beyond the caprices of foreign powers." "If by the necessity of the thing, manufactures should once be established, and take root among us, they will pave the way, still more, to the future grandeur and glory of America; and by lessening its need of external commerce, will render it still securer against the encroachments of tyranny."

The effect of these restrictions on the commercial interests of Great Britain, of Ireland, and of the West Indies is rapidly portrayed, as justifying the belief that those interests would compel a change of measures. In answer to the alarm sounded as to a blockade of New York, he shows the impracticability of a permanent embargo, as producing a permanent severance of empire.

Having controverted the general arguments of his opponents, he addresses the farmers as a class. "I do not address you in particular, because I have any greater connection with you than with other people. I despise all false pretensions and mean arts. Let those have recourse to dissimulation who cannot defend their cause

without it. 'Tis my maxim to let the plain truth speak for itself." "'Tis the farmer who is most oppressed in all countries where slavery exists."

He then, in glowing colors, displays the injustice of the Boston Port Bill, and directs the confidence of the colonists to the wisdom of Congress. Closing the summary of their injuries, he exclaims, the "Farmer" cries, "tell me not of delegates, congresses, committees, mobs, riots, insurrections, and associations,—a plague on them all! Give me the steady, uniform, unbiassed influence of the courts of justice. I have been happy under their protection,—I shall be so again." "I say, tell me not of the British commons, lords, ministry, ministerial tools, placemen, pensioners, parasites,—I scorn to let my life and property depend upon the pleasure of any of them. Give me the steady, uniform, unshaken security of constitutional freedom. Give me the right of trial by a jury of my own neighbors, and to be taxed by my own representatives only. What will become of the law and courts of justice without this? The shadow may remain, but the substance will be gone. I would die to preserve the law upon a solid foundation; but take away liberty, and the foundation is destroyed."

A short time after,* a reply followed, entitled "A View of the Controversy, by a Westchester Farmer," marked with still greater asperity than the former, and pressing its object with new arguments. The inertness of the colony is shown, to prove the narrow circle of factious principles; the right of legislation in the colonies is denied, on inferences drawn from the tenor of the colonial charters; the effect of an embargo, to sever from them their English friends, is alleged; the dangers of a civil war strongly deprecated, and a remedy pro-

* January 5, 1775.

posed of vesting in parliament the enactment of general laws, reserving to the legislatures the mere right of taxation.

Within a month,* this paper was followed by a more elaborate answer, of seventy-eight pages, entitled "The Farmer Refuted; or, a more Comprehensive and Impartial View of the Disputes between Great Britain and the Colonies, intended as a Further Vindication of the Congress, in answer to a Letter from A W. Farmer, entitled A View of the Controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies, including a Mode of determining the Present Disputes finally and effectually, &c. By a Sincere Friend to America. Tituli Remedia pollicentur, sed Pyxides ipsæ venena continent. The title promises Remedies, but the Box itself poisons. Printed by James Rivington. 1775."

The author of "The Congress Canvassed" had spoken of the measures of the Congress as tending to resolve society into its elementary principles, and reduce it to a state of nature. His "Refuter" compares his idea of a state of nature with that of Hobbes, that moral obligation is conventional, and virtue purely artificial; denying the existence and supremacy of a Deity. "For," he says, "to grant that there is a Supreme Intelligence who rules the world, and has established laws to regulate the actions of his creatures, and still to assert that men are in a state of nature, may be considered as perfectly free from all restraints of law and government, appear to a common understanding altogether irreconcilable." He then gives a just and philosophical definition of "natural rights," and deduces from them the rights of the colonies, in contradistinction to the rights of parliament. Assuming the position, that the principle of colonial connection is by grant from

* February 5, 1775.

the crown, he distinguishes between the allegiance due to a common sovereign, and the authority of the commons, which is commensurate only with the sphere of their election; and admitting the incidental power of parliament over the colonies as derived from *their consent*, he shows that the extent of that consent is the only just measure of their authority. The true principles of free government implying a share in legislation:—"You are mistaken," he says, "when you confine arbitrary government to a monarchy. It is not the supreme power being placed in one instead of many, that discriminates an arbitrary from a free government. When any people are ruled by laws in framing which they have no part, that are to bind them to all intents and purposes, without in the same manner binding the legislature themselves, they are, in the strictest sense, slaves, and the government, with respect to them, is despotic; and hence the authority of parliament over the colonies would in all probability be a more intolerable and excessive species of despotism than the most absolute monarchy, as the temptation to abuse would be greater." He contends that the right of colonial legislation is an *inherent right*, "and that the foundation of the English constitution rests upon the principle, that laws have no validity without the consent of the people." "Natural liberty is a gift of the beneficent Creator to the whole human race; civil liberty is *founded* on it; civil liberty is only natural liberty, modified and secured by civil society." In answer to the inferences, from the charters, he proceeds to a survey of the political history of the colonies, and proves from the terms of the charters that the idea of parliamentary supremacy is excluded, and an express exemption reserved from duties on exports and imports. In confirmation of the sense of the crown on this question, he adverts to the historical facts, that when

a bill to give to British subjects the privilege of fishing on the American coast was introduced into the House of Commons, it was announced from the throne "that America was not annexed to the realm, and that it was not fitting that parliament should make laws for those countries." And, that in a succeeding reign the royal assent was refused to a similar bill, on the ground "that the colonies were out of the realm and jurisdiction of parliament;" that on the passage of the first act to impose duties, it was opposed in Virginia, and, to satisfy that high spirited colony, a declaration was given under the privy seal, "that taxes ought not to be laid without the consent of the general assembly." Canvassing carefully each successive charter, he shows, that the common principle extends through them all, and that a different doctrine is contrary to "THE SACRED RIGHTS OF MANKIND, WHICH ARE NOT TO BE RUMMAGED FOR AMONG OLD PARCHMENTS, OR MUSTY RECORDS: THEY ARE WRITTEN, AS WITH A SUNBEAM, IN THE WHOLE VOLUME OF HUMAN NATURE, BY THE HAND OF THE DIVINITY ITSELF, AND CAN NEVER BE ERASED OR OBSCURED BY MORTAL POWER."

Having closed the argument against the authority of parliament, as founded either on the British constitution, the natural rights of man, or the several charters of the colony, he admits their right to *regulate trade*, but as a right "*conceded*" to them by the colonies, and only to be exercised on principles which induced the concession, common to all the subjects of the realm.

Pursuing the argument of his adversary, he again vindicates the proceedings of Congress; and after reciting the successive acts of usurpation, and the inefficacy of petitions, from the fact that parliament had never abandoned the *right of taxation*, remarks, that the violence of the ministry demanded the adoption of efficacious meas-

ures as our only security. After eloquently picturing the blockade of Boston, which led to the convention of Congress, he thus replies to its alleged illegality:—"When the first principles of civil society are violated, and the rights of a whole people are invaded, the common forms of municipal law are not to be regarded. Men may then betake themselves to the law of nature; and if they but conform their actions to that standard, all cavils against them betray either ignorance or dishonesty. There are some events in society to which human laws cannot extend; but when applied to them, lose all their force and efficacy. In short, when human laws contradict or discountenance the means which are necessary to preserve the essential rights of any society, they defeat the proper end of all laws, and so become null and void."

After an able sketch of the commercial relations of the two countries, he shows the means of self-dependence, and confuting his antagonist, who had ridiculed the impotence of resistance, meets him on the broad ground of arms and independence: confidently affirms the ability to support their freedom, and by a system of protracted warfare, with the aid of foreign succor, to weary out the mother country, and exhaust her strength.

The following extracts show how far, at this early age, he anticipated their future resources:—"With respect to *cotton*, you do not pretend to deny that a sufficient quantity of that may be produced. Several of the southern colonies are so favorable to it, that, with due cultivation, in a couple of years they would afford enough to clothe the whole continent. As to the expense of bringing it by land, the best way will be to *manufacture* it where it grows, and afterwards transport it to the other colonies. Upon this plan, I apprehend, the expense would not be greater than to build and equip large ships to import the

manufactures of Great Britain from thence. If we were to turn our attention from external to internal commerce, we would give greater stability and more lasting prosperity to our country than she can possibly have otherwise. We should not then import the vices and luxuries of foreign climes, nor should we make hasty strides to public corruption and depravity. Those obstacles, which to the eye of timidity and apprehension appear like the Alps, to the hand of resolution and perseverance become mere hillocks." In reference to the mode of conducting the war, he remarks: "Let it be remembered there are no large plains for the two armies to meet in and decide the contest by some decisive stroke, where any advantage gained by either side must be prosecuted, till a complete victory is obtained. The circumstances of our country put it in our power to evade a pitched battle. It will be better policy to harass and exhaust the soldiery by frequent skirmishes and incursions, than to take the open field with them, by which means they would have the full benefit of their superior regularity and skill. Americans are better qualified for that kind of fighting, which is most adapted to the country, than regular troops: should the soldiery advance into the country, as they would be obliged to do, if they had any inclination to subdue us, their discipline would be of little use to them. Whatever may be said of the disciplined troops of Britain, the event of the contest must be extremely doubtful. There is a certain enthusiasm in liberty, that makes human nature rise above itself in acts of bravery and heroism." The probability of foreign succor is adduced from the strong motives of a free trade with America, of weakening Great Britain and of increased strength. "Superadded," he remarks, "to these general and prevailing inducements, there are others of a more particular nature.

They would feel no small inconvenience in the loss of those supplies they annually get from us, and their islands would be in the greatest distress for the want of our trade. From these reflections it is more than probable, that America is able to support its freedom, even by the force of arms, if she be not betrayed by her own sons."

The firm, confident temper manifested in these pamphlets and the ardent love of liberty they exhibited, gave them a rapid and extensive popularity. They were immediately appealed to by the Whigs as triumphant defences of their opinions and conduct. Who is the author? was the inquiry. "They were judged to be so masterly as to create a general belief in the Tory circles that Jay was the author," but when they were ascertained to be the productions of Alexander Hamilton, a youth about eighteen, a student in the college and new to the country, admiration of them was lost in surprise at the discovery. By many it was doubted. "Doctor Cooper," Troup relates, "assured me he had no doubt the answers were from Jay's pen; and he ridiculed the idea of their having been written by such a stripling as Hamilton. I well knew the contrary, as Hamilton wrote the answers when he and I occupied the same room in college, and I read them before they were sent to the press." *

Hamilton was at once regarded as a prodigy of intellect. "Sir," said the gallant Willet, "Sears was a warm man, but with little reflection; McDougall was strong-minded, and Jay, appearing to fall in with the measures of Sears, tempered and controlled them; but Hamilton, after these great writings, became our oracle."

The importance of gaining such an adversary was felt by the friends of the crown; and it is related that a most liberal offer was tendered to Hamilton by Cooper, if

* Letter of Colonel Troup, March 31, 1828.

he would consent to write in behalf of the ministry. It is unnecessary to say it was rejected.

When the vigor and terseness of style; the mass of information; the closeness of reasoning; the happy exhibition of the weak points of his antagonist; the clear perception and exposition of the principles of political liberty; the discrimination between the rejected and scarcely conceded power of Parliament; and the comprehensive and prophetic view taken of the great questions then discussed, involving the destiny of the American people and the cause of liberty throughout the world, are well considered; these pamphlets will be acknowledged to have merits of which a practised, philosophic statesman might be proud. Regarded as the productions of such a youth, the wonder they excited is not a source of surprise.

During these discussions, in the first month of the new year, the New York assembly again met. The preceding assembly had granted a supply to the troops, and the only evidence given of sympathy with their patriotic constituents was the appointment of a committee of correspondence as to the rights of the colonies.

Tryon having, since its adjournment, returned to Europe, the executive chair was again filled by Colden. His tone was subdued. He lamented the disordered state of the colony, and commended to the assembly a calm examination of the existing discontents.

The opposition was still led by two men of determined resolution—Philip Schuyler and George Clinton—who, together with John Jay, were the leading patriots of New York.

When the importance of the concurrence of this province, and the embarrassments they encountered are taken into view, contending at the same time with the whole

influence of the ministry, with the power of the colonial government adroitly exerted, a large body of its wealthy proprietors actively co-operating with the timid part of the mercantile community, amid a divided population and distracted counsels, it is difficult to measure the value of their services.

The first of these, Colonel Schuyler, had been a partisan officer in the war of seventeen hundred and fifty-six. By his fertility of resource and unyielding firmness, he rendered distinguished services to the British commander,* who fell, lamented, by his side, and to him the honor of his interment was confided. Descended from one of the early Dutch settlers of this province, the influence and respectability of whose family had been transmitted through successive generations, he exercised an almost unrivalled sway over the minds of a people, whose frontier position had demanded the frequent exertion of all their energies.

Possessed of great wealth, he embarked it in the contest, as a pledge of his patriotism, and, in the course of the Revolution, sacrificed as much of fortune and of feeling, as any other individual in America.

Party to the most secret councils of the continent, he had staked every thing on the issue of the conflict, and had acquired a weight of influence which led both Virginia and Massachusetts to regard him as the connecting link in the high purposes at which they aimed. "On the shoulders of this great man," said Judge Benson, "the conduct of New York rested."

His love of fame was less than his love of country; and when the misadventures of some robbed him of the glory to which he was entitled, and while artifice withheld from him an opportunity of vindication, he is not seen in-

* Lord Howe.

dulging in invidious comments on the successes of others, but continuing within the sphere of his great influence and resources, to advance the cause of his early preference. Thus, his strength of character sustained him when other men sink, and his adversity gave him more true honor than he could have derived from success. Sullied by no private vices, and misled by no small passions, his path through life was high, unspotted, equal; and he died with a reputation, which those who knew and followed him, have contended to perpetuate.

Sprung from a family of Irish descent, which counted among their ancestry a gallant officer of the cavaliers who fell with Charles the First,—George Clinton, in a nobler cause, displayed the perseverance of his blood.

In early youth he broke from the thrall of parental authority, and exchanged for his father's house, a berth on board of a privateer, in which he made a cruise during the French war. He is next seen in service with his father and brother, in an attack which resulted in the capture of Frontignac. He then became a lawyer, and was placed soon after in that sphere in which he was the associate of Schuyler, in opposition to the influence of the crown. Transferred by the popular choice to the continental Congress, he took part in the measures of seventeen hundred seventy-five and seventeen hundred seventy-six, and on the formation of the constitution of the State of New York, was chosen its governor, and filled that station during a period of eighteen years. On the first call to arms, he was appointed a brigadier-general, and during the most trying years of the war commanded in the Highlands, and held the keys of that natural citadel. In perseverance, and love of liberty, he was not less distinguished than his great compatriot; but in the modes of attaining their objects, and in their political views,

they were most unlike. By Schuyler, the declaration of independence was regarded but as the first step towards the creation of a great nation, pledged to the principles which that instrument proclaimed. With Clinton, the love of liberty was a fiercer passion.

In Schuyler, it was a principle of high benevolence, enlarging with the sphere of action. With Clinton, it was a jealousy of power, contracting and deforming the object of his adoration. The one, conscious of his own imperfections, regarded mankind with a kindred feeling, as full of weaknesses from which they were to be protected. The other, with a profound knowledge of human nature, and consummate talents for popularity, looked more to the passions of men, as a field from which could be gathered a store of influence for his own advancement. The one aided in building up the constitution of the United States on the basis of a firm and perpetual union. The other, had he prevailed, would have doomed them to perpetual anarchy.

John Jay, younger than either, was educated for the bar, and had acquired celebrity in his profession. His father, the descendant of a persecuted Huguenot, established himself in the vicinity of New-Rochelle, where, surrounded by a small community who traced their origin and their adversities to the same source, he pursued an agricultural life, and preserved all the simplicity of habits and purity of character, which had been cultivated by the Protestants in France, amid the various vicissitudes of their fortunes. Educated in such a school, he espoused the cause of liberty with an ardor equalled by the zeal with which he defended it, and soon acquired the ascendency, to which his probity, and the soundness of his understanding, entitled him.

By some, his jealousy of error was supposed to have

run into a proneness to suspicion; and his strict adherence to right to have bordered on severity; but the basis of his character was a lofty virtue and manly self-dependence. Elevated by these qualities in the public confidence, he rose to some of the highest stations in the civil branch of the government, and long shone conspicuous among the great lights which ushered this nation into existence,—a pure, consistent, unyielding patriot.

Sustained by the ardent feelings of the other colonies, the exertions of these men to secure the concert of the government of New York were unremitting, but vain. The majority of the assembly would not be diverted from their servile counsels, although their efforts towards conciliation had been treated by the ministry with contumely and neglect.

Though such was the temper of this body, there was in New York a mass and vigor of resistance which could be neither soothed nor swayed; which favor could not allure nor danger appal; single of purpose, clear of view, enduring unto the end. While from England were chiefly derived those well-defined and grave opinions of liberty that enter so largely into the character of the American mind; yet it was a school in which religious and political passions and prejudices widely ruled. The descendant of the cavalier was still an admirer of the social distinctions which existed there, and of the ecclesiastic exclusiveness which almost governed. The puritan, himself an object of proscription, was in his mood and practice proscriptive as to religious thought; jealous, and not a little arbitrary, as to political opinion.

The existence, therefore, in the midway of the American colonies of a race of more positive views, free from the influences of prescription, familiar only with the simplest notions of freedom, applying those notions less to

political philosophy and more to the practical interests of society, whose religion itself was almost comprised in the single idea, of confidence in God against the tyranny of man, was of great moment.

Among such a people, the popular sentiment, though less refined, would have a broader, fuller, quicker, stronger growth. Free from mutual jealousies, for there were among themselves no objects of jealousy—ready to confide, for their confidence could only be obtained by meritorious service; looking to the good of the whole, for it was a good in which each felt he would share; not averse to general, comprehensive ideas, for these were of a nature to command their attention and respect—they were the compatriots of GROTIUS—the world's man—an exile for the world's great truths; and ready to act upon them, for they conflicted with no local interests or preconceived opinions, but were a part, and a chief part, of the very strength upon which wisdom would desire to build the foundations of an empire, not content with two oceans as its bounds.

Encouraged by success, for the UNITED PROVINCES in all their successes were before them,—nor was the past to them more than a promise,—they had broken suddenly and for ever from ancient ties. Holland was an object of affectionately proud remembrance, but it was not Holland because governed by a line of princes they revered, but Holland emancipated from tyranny by the courage of her own offspring, and holding forth her free hand to the commerce and friendship of the world. The descendants of the Dutch had grown in number relatively with the other growths of population.* They were found through-

* The total population of this colony in 1774 was 168,007—of the city of New York, whites, 18,726; of Albany, whites, 38,829. The population had doubled in twenty years.

out the colony,* but in small communities, not losing their identity. Appeals to them were therefore made, and answered with instant effect. These appeals were the more effective because the subjects of them were few, and of primary importance.

Upon this solid base of concentrated thought and feeling, Schuyler stood, their representative. Nor were other supports wanting. The Scotch, the French, the Irish, the German races all warmly concurred, beholding the majestic but abused power of Great Britain with cherished hate.

In despite of the influences known to prevail in the assembly, Schuyler resolved that this session should not pass without making the issue with the people distinct and irrevocable. The address to the lieutenant-governor expressed a willingness to pursue the most probable means to obtain a redress of grievances. What were these means? Petitions and remonstrances, or limited measures of opposition? To bring the matter to a test, a motion was made to consider the proceedings of Congress. It was defeated by a single vote. Thanks to the delegates were proffered. They were rejected by a larger vote. A proposal to appoint delegates to the second Congress met with the same fate by a still larger vote. Next thanks were proposed to the merchants for the non-importation association. This also was lost. Thus there was to be no opposition to the arbitrary enactments of Great Britain.

The report of the committee on grievances was taken up in course. Schuyler, with his tall, manly form, beetling brow, and kindling eye, then came forward, and introduced a resolution condemning, in earnest, explicit

* In the list of militia officers, Dutch names are found in every county, though fewest in those of Long Island.

terms, the several obnoxious acts of parliament. In this he prevailed. A resolution was next offered by Delancey, declaring, with all deferential allegiance, the right of parliament to regulate the trade of the colonies, and to impose duties on any imports that may interfere with the products of his majesty's dominions. It passed, Schuyler and Clinton voting in the negative. An amendment was then moved by Schuyler, to exclude "every idea of taxation, internal or external, for the purpose of raising a revenue," by the king, "on his subjects in America without their consent." It was defeated by the previous question. By these successive moves the proceedings of the late Congress were marshalled in review. The vote condemning the Boston Port Bill, and the act violating the charter of Massachusetts, were carried in a thin house by a majority of two. A request that the colonial judges should be appointed during good behavior, as in England, not during the pleasure of the king, was rejected. Schuyler now moved a declaration, that "our commotions are honest struggles for maintaining our constitutional liberty, and not dictated by a desire of independence." This also was defeated by a large majority. He then proposed an amendment to the petition to the king, "although your majesty's subjects have, in some instances, submitted to the power exercised by the parent state, they nevertheless consider themselves entitled to an equal participation of freedom with their fellow-subjects in Great Britain." Even this was lost by a similar vote. The several adopted resolves were embodied in a petition to the Lords and to the Commons, toned down to accord with the feelings of the majority, and were transmitted to Edmund Burke.

On the third of April the colonial assembly adjourned, never to meet again.

No option remained to the patriots. Redress was not to be obtained through what claimed to be the legitimate assembly, yet redress must be had. The people must be represented. A new popular committee had been formed, and during the session of the assembly a public meeting was called to consider of the mode of electing delegates to the second Congress.

The ultra loyalists objected to the measure, for the assembly had rejected a proposition to that effect. Their vote ought to be decisive.

On the appointed day, the meeting assembled at the Liberty Pole, and under a banner inscribed with the words, "Constitutional Liberty," moved in procession to the Exchange.

The ministerial party, with several of the members of the council at their head, the leaders of the majority in the assembly, a few officers of the army, navy, and customs, appeared in a compact body. There were symptoms of an affray, but quiet was preserved, by a conscious sense of the strength of the good cause; and a resolution was passed to choose deputies to a convention of the colony, to elect delegates to the Congress. The election was held, and by an immense majority the popular movement succeeded. Notice of this result was given to the other counties. A provincial congress of forty members was chosen, who met on the twentieth of April, and appointed delegates to the general Congress. Thus New York, the head-quarters of its army, the future archiepiscopal see; her college intended to be the university of North America, her library, founded by private munificence,* called the "Union Society Library," all indicating it as the contemplated seat of its western empire, was wrested from the crown, to fulfil a higher destiny.

* Charles Ward Apthorp was a chief promoter.

A meeting, over which Lamb and Willett presided, men who proceeded from words to actions, was again held in the city. Its object was to stop supplies for the troops near Boston. This was effected; and with a clear vision of the near future, Sears, who had been displaced from a small office in punishment of his zeal, proposed that the people provide themselves with arms and ammunition. This was agreed to. Sears was arrested for imputed treason, and carried before the mayor. Refusing to give bail, he was committed; but the people wrested their bold leader from the officers. He passed in triumph through the city.*

Not less expressive indications of the popular feeling were given elsewhere. In his own county of Fairfax Washington presided. Resolutions were then adopted to raise money by poll, to be handed to a committee with a list of those refusing to subscribe; and all the freemen of Virginia between the ages of sixteen and fifty were invited to form themselves into companies, and to exercise themselves in arms.

The provincial congress of Massachusetts took the same measure, urging also the manufacture of arms, in which Connecticut likewise promptly engaged.

Never were a people more patiently loyal than were a large majority of the British American colonists. All their affections and all their pride had been associated with the welfare and with the glory of England. They discriminated between a great and glorious people, with whom there is still every motive to cultivate amicable and liberal relations, and the policy of rulers who did not represent the real sentiments of the people. Thus they yearned for an accommodation of the disputes, and were waiting anxiously for tidings of the course of the government at home.

* Life of John Lamb, 100, 101.

The parliament which had passed the offensive laws had been dissolved. A new parliament was to meet in January of this year. In that great arena of freedom its honest voice might yet prevail. Pitt, now Lord Chatham, proposed an address at the opening of its session, asking the recall of the troops near Boston, as the first step in a course of conciliation. The first advance, he said, should come from them. The objectionable acts should be repealed. In a lofty tone the ministry replied, coercion is unavoidable. If ever, now, Parliament must assert its supremacy. This not sustained, all is given up. The opposition denounced the Boston port bill as a wanton tyranny. The claim of supremacy, they averred, was to gratify national pride, and to delude Parliament and the people. Their efforts were fruitless. The motion was defeated by a large vote.* Petitions from London and from the great towns produced acrimonious debates, but led to no result. The petition of the Continental Congress was stigmatized as the act of an "illegal body." The Commons voted it down by an immense majority.†

On the first of February, Chatham, bowed under physical infirmities, introduced a conciliatory bill. It declared as a compromise, that no tax be levied in America without the consent of the colonial assemblies; asserted the right of the king to send his armies every where; legalized the ensuing session of Congress for the purposes of recognizing the supreme legislative authority and superintending power of Parliament, and of making a free grant to the king and to his successors of a certain and perpetual revenue, subject to their disposal. It revoked the acts in controversy, and would have secured to the colonies all the immunities of their charters.

* 68 to 18. † 218 to 68.

This bill of compromise was not permitted even to lie upon the table. Its consideration was refused by a vote of two to one. Petitions came from the West Indies praying an accommodation. They were disregarded, and the minister announced his policy. It was to increase the armed force, to put an end to the foreign trade of New England, to stop the fisheries.

An address to this effect was adopted in both houses by a vote of nearly two-thirds; and a law was enacted to carry these restrictions into effect, in which the other colonies, except New York, were after included.

Edmund Burke also sought to effect a conciliation. He presented the memorial of the loyal assembly of New York. Nothing, he observed, could be more proper than its tone, though all its views might not be incontrovertible. Never was there a more fair opportunity of ending these disputes. It presented claims, was the reply, inconsistent with the declared authority of Parliament. On that ground its reception was refused.*

The memorial to the Lords shared the same fate, as did petitions from the British inhabitants of Canada against the bill altering the government of that province.

Franklin, as a last hope, had been engaged in preparing "a plan of permanent union." Conferences were held with the ministers and modifications suggested. The Boston port bill might be repealed, but the other acts relating to Massachusetts were "improvements of her constitution," and must therefore continue, "as well to be a standing example of the power of the Parliament!"

Finding every effort abortive, Franklin returned to his country, where he was advised, that "whatever specious pretences were offered, they were all hollow, and that to

* 186 to 67.

get a larger field to fatten a herd of worthless parasites was all that was intended." *

In the long interval of hope and doubt, Boston had well regarded the sage advice of the first Congress. Without a government, without the administration of justice, the people of the Bay State maintained order, reasoned out their cause to its just conclusions, made more apparent their grievous wrongs, while preparing for a final issue, and counteracting the preparatory measures of General Gage, the British governor, and commander of the forces. England had passed a law to prevent the shipment of powder to America. She had induced the States General of the United Provinces to issue a proclamation forbidding the transport thither of all warlike stores. There was a deposit of guns at Salem. Gage resolved to seize them. Troops were landed there, but the pieces were gone. They were followed until an arm of the sea was reached, and a drawbridge to be passed. The draw was ordered to be lowered. The citizens refused as a matter of legal right. The road was private. They had a right to raise an obstruction. Boats were ordered to be launched. The owners scuttled them with their axes. The boats were their own property. Violence was threatened by the commanding officer, and blood would have been shed, had not a "minister" present prevailed upon his congregation to lower the draw. The delay had enabled the patriots, of whom the leader was no less a man than Timothy Pickering, to carry off the cannon.

Stores were collected at Concord, twenty miles from Boston. Gage, anxious to prevent hostilities, decided to destroy them. Eight hundred grenadiers and light infantry, the flower of the British army, were ordered on this

* History of Great Britain, by J. R. Miller. Fothergill to Franklin.

duty. They performed it. But on their return, the people had assembled, and from their coverts poured in upon the retreating party a close, destructive fire. Thus occurred what is known as the "Battle of Lexington."

A general appeal to the sword seemed inevitable. And now were seen the power of the dissenting clergy, and the religious temperament of the people. Farewell sermons were addressed to the militia. "Play the man for your country and for the cities of your God, and the Lord do that which seemeth good," was a teeming text. The drums beat to arms, and, followed by fathers, mothers, wives, sisters and children, the hardy yeomanry of New England marched on to the expected conflict. As they passed the meeting houses on the Lord's day with drums and fifes playing, the only question was, "Will God be pleased with such a breach of the Sabbath?*

In New York and in Philadelphia the Presbyterian synods issued pastoral letters suited to the occasion. The lawyers argued to the people the right of the cause; and the people, with bursts of passion, cried aloud "To arms." In New Jersey the provincial treasury was taken possession of. In Philadelphia the shipping was embargoed. In Maryland and in Virginia the public arms were seized.

Trumbull, governor of Connecticut, wrote to Gage; "Is there no alternative but absolute submission, or the desolations of war?" and ordered the train bands to their duty.

The Provincial Congress of Massachusetts collected and sent to England evidence to show that the British troops were the aggressors, asserted their loyalty, appealed to the clergy for their influence, and to Heaven as to the justice of their cause; seized the public money and

* Hist. Coll. Connec. 104.

raised and marched a force to Boston, exceeding in number the royal army. The skirmish at Lexington was announced to New York in the concluding words of a letter, "The crimson fountain is opened, and God only knew when it would close." Tumultuous menace and execrations followed. Patrols were formed, and, directed by Sears and Willett, took their rounds throughout the night as though an enemy were at their doors. Mobs assembled. The keys of the custom house were taken. The armory was broken open, and, dismayed by the irresistible impetuosity of the populace, a battalion of the royal troops surrendered their weapons, and left the city.

A committee of one hundred was raised. The organization of the militia was recommended, and an address was sent to the City of London, stating, that "all the horrors of civil war will never compel America to submit to taxation by authority of Parliament." "The whole country are ardently wishing peace. They are indefatigable in preparing for the last appeal."*

Five days after, Crown Point and Ticonderoga were surprised and taken by a volunteer expedition from New Hampshire and Connecticut, "in order," as was stated, "to prevent the Canadians and Indians from making incursions into New England." †

On the same day, the tenth of May, the second Continental Congress met. Its proceedings were also secret.

A circular letter from Franklin and other colonial agents, dated at London, advised them of the avowed determination of the ministry "to enforce obedience to all the late laws;" and that with this purpose "a military force was under orders for America"—"The treatment, the petitions already presented have hitherto received, is

* American Archives, May 5, 1775.

† New York Gazette, May 15, 1775.

such, as, in our opinion, can afford you no reliance on present relief through their means."

A letter from the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts was also received, stating the recent hostilities, their measures of defence, and the evidence that the British were the aggressors.

In reply to an application from New York, it was recommended, if troops should arrive there, that colony should "act on the defensive as long as might be consistent with their own safety," that these troops be not suffered to erect fortifications or to take any steps for cutting off the communication between the town and country; and if they commit hostilities or invade private property, the inhabitants should defend themselves, repelling force by force—a sufficient number of men to be embodied and ready to protect from insult and injury.

A committee was ordered, of which Washington was the first, to report immediately what posts in New York were necessary to be occupied. Advices arriving of the capture of Ticonderoga, the cannon and stores were recommended to be removed from it, and New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Massachusetts to establish a strong post at the south end of Lake George.

At the instance of New Jersey, a recent resolution of the British House of Commons was considered. It was, that if any colony shall propose to make provision for the common defence disposable by Parliament, and shall engage to provide for the support of its civil government and the administration of justice, it will be proper, if such proposal shall be approved by the king and Parliament, as long as such provision shall be made, to forbear, in respect to such colony, levying any duty or tax, other than duties for the regulation of commerce, to be carried to the account of the respective colony.

Stating the unconstitutional and oppressive acts for levying and enforcing the collection of taxes, and the hostilities which had been commenced, and their ardent desire of conciliation; Congress met this overture by resolving that measures be entered upon for opening a negotiation, and that it be a part of their petition to the king.

At the same time, doubting the success of such negotiation, New York was urged to persevere the more vigorously in preparing for her defence. To prevent aggressions, a second letter was addressed to Canada, asking peace and union in defence of their common liberties, and incursions into it were dissuaded.

In return for the recent acts restricting their commerce and stopping the labors of the fishermen, exportations to all such parts of British America as had not acceded to their commercial association were "immediately to cease." No provisions of any kind or other necessaries were to be furnished to the British fisheries. No draft or money order of any British officer, agent or contractor, was to be received or negotiated, or money supplied to them, and no supplies to be made to the royal forces. Thus, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and the West Indies, were all to be reached; and the means of supplying the British army without direct remittances of specie were at an end.

These decisive measures preceded others of larger scope and more pointed character. A general post was established. A committee, of which Schuyler was second to Washington, was directed to form an estimate of the money to be raised. A general fast was ordered. Powder mills were to be put in motion, a corps of riflemen to be organized.

Having advised Massachusetts, in her pressing emer-

gency to elect a temporary government, a committee, of which were Washington and Schuyler, was chosen to prepare rules and regulations for an army.

Washington, on motion of Thomas Johnson, afterwards governor of Maryland, was nominated General and Commander-in-chief, and was unanimously elected. He accepted this great trust with his characteristic modesty.* Artemas Ward of Massachusetts, Charles Lee, Philip Schuyler, and Israel Putnam were chosen major-generals. Horatio Gates adjutant-general, eight brigadiers† and the other officers of a general staff.

In this selection, while the qualities of Washington gave him a just pre-eminence and clothed the preparations for impending war with a national character, the choice of the other officers shows where the brunt of the contest was expected and the military power of the colonies that were to meet it.

To supply the public wants, an emission of two millions of dollars in bills of credit was ordered, for the re-

* The distinction of having first moved the nomination of Washington is claimed by John Adams. Yet he writes in his diary, in which this claim is preferred: "I was daily urging all these things, but we were embarrassed with more than one difficulty, not only with the party in favor of the petition to the king, and the party who were jealous of independence, but a third party, which was a Southern party against a Northern, and a jealousy against a New England army, under the command of a New England general. Whether this jealousy was sincere, or whether it was mere pride and a haughty ambition of furnishing a Southern general to command the Northern army, I cannot say; but the intention was very visible to me that Colonel Washington was their object, and *so many of our staunchest men were in the plan, that we could carry nothing without conceding to it*".—*Works of John Adams*, ii. 415. His letter of Aug. 6, 1822, states that Thomas Johnson subsequently nominated him.—*Ibid*, 513.

† Seth Pomeroy, David Wooster, Joseph Spencer, of Connecticut; Richard Montgomery, of New York; William Heath, John Thomas, of Massachusetts; John Sullivan, of New Hampshire; Nathaniel Greene, of Rhode Island.

demption of which "the twelve confederated colonies" were pledged.

To secure peace with the Indians, the colonies were divided into three great departments. Schuyler was placed at the head of the Northern. Indians were only to be engaged as allies in case other Indians were induced to commit hostilities, or to enter into an offensive alliance with Great Britain.

Intelligence being received of the gallant repulse of the British at Bunker's Hill by a body of men under Prescot, whose hands were yet rough from the plough or the oar, the committees on the state of the nation brought forward their important reports.

A declaration setting forth the causes and necessity of taking up arms; a second petition to the king; a second address to the British people; one to Ireland, another to Jamaica, were published, fraught with indignation at the wrongs perpetrated, and avowals of a determination to resist, not unmingled with regrets. "What measures have we taken that betray a desire of independence? Have we called in the aid of those foreign powers who are the rivals of your grandeur? Have we taken advantage of the weakness of your troops, and hastened to destroy them before they were reinforced? Have we not permitted them to receive the succors we could have intercepted? Let not your enemies and ours persuade you that in this we were influenced by fear or any other unworthy motive! The lives of Britons are still dear to us. When hostilities were commenced, when, on a late occasion, we were wantonly attacked by your troops, though we repelled their assaults and returned their blows, yet we lamented the wounds they obliged us to inflict; nor have we yet learned to rejoice at a victory over Englishmen."

The whole people were called upon to form themselves

into a regular militia, and a committee was raised, Jay at its head, to devise means to protect the trade of the colonies. Two joint treasurers of the "United Colonies" were now appointed. Each colony was to choose its own treasurer, and to provide means to sink the bills of credit by an equal mode of taxation, arbitrary quotas of contribution being fixed according to the estimated relative number of their respective inhabitants.

The accession of Georgia having completed the confederacy, Congress analyzed the late resolution of the British commons for conciliation, exhibited its fallacious propositions; recited in brief, emphatic terms, the rights assailed and the wrongs inflicted, concluding with the declaration, "that nothing but our own exertions may defeat the ministerial sentence of death or abject submission." Having declared the non-exportation and non-importation agreements to comprehend every European island and settlement within the British dominions, and all the West Indies, British and foreign, Congress, on the first of August, adjourned to the fifth of the ensuing month.

During this period the Provincial Congress of New York was also in session. Its earliest acts were to order a post to be fortified at King's Bridge, near the city, and for an emission of paper money. These were intended as measures of prevention, not of preparative aggression. For New York, though led on to its duty by a determined few, from its divided sentiment, and exposed, defenceless condition, was most anxious for accommodation. An address was at this time made to her lieutenant-governor to prevent the landing, at her seaport, of the reinforcements on their way from England, and an address to the Canadians, inviting them to unite, and thus to insure immunity to her extensive vulnerable northern frontier.

Washington was now on his way to Boston accom-

panied by Lee. Tryon was hourly expected. In their dilemma, the Congress of New York ordered a body of militia to receive with usual honors whichever should first arrive.

Washington was the first. These honors were paid him, and were followed by an address from the Congress. They avowed "as the fondest wish of each American soul, an accommodation with our mother country." This accomplished, "you will cheerfully resign." He assured them, "Every exertion of my worthy colleagues and myself will be equally extended to the restoration of peace and harmony, as to the fatal but necessary operations of war." Leaving Schuyler in that city with instructions to keep his eye on Tryon, whom he would have seized had not Congress been in session, he proceeded through New England, welcomed by its out-rushing inhabitants, and by military parades.

Tryon arrived and resumed the government of New York. The ultra royalists were encouraged. In answer to an address from the mayor asking his intercession, he assured him, "He was authorized to say, that nothing can give greater satisfaction to the royal breast than to see again an united and happy people."

The Provincial Congress completed, at this time, a plan of conciliation. It proposed that all the offensive acts of trade be repealed. Parliament to regulate their trade, and the colonial legislatures annually elected to impose taxes; or, that a President for all the colonies be appointed by the crown, and a Continental Congress be elected to raise and apportion the aids.

McDougall moved this plan be not transmitted to Congress until asked for by them. But it was sent to the New York delegates and acknowledged in respectful terms, lamenting the "unnatural quarrel."

The strong desire of this body for conciliation did not prevent it declaring its dissatisfaction with the act establishing popery along their frontier.

The fearing, hoping mind of New York required an impulse. Hamilton saw the necessity, and determined to appeal to a feeling common to the breasts of all its people.

To the Churchman, papacy was not a pleasant thing. He had been taught in his Book of Common Prayer to denounce "Popish treachery," "Popish tyranny," and "arbitrary power." By the dissenting English and Dutch it was abhorred. The red cross effaced from the flag at Salem, as being "a present to the king by the pope, and a relic of Anti-Christ," spoke the early puritan feeling. Nor was it permitted to die away. The clergy who accompanied the New England troops to Louisburgh carried with them axes to cut down the idols of the Catholic French. The blue ribband worn over their buff vests by the commander-in-chief and by his staff as the emblem of their rank, was the chosen color of the Scottish Covenanter, of Cromwell, and of William of Orange; and though Washington would not merely regard it as a Protestant type, the exulting English and Dutch dissenters associated it fondly with all their sufferings and with all their triumphs. It had been ordained of God.*

New York, with its many religious modes and forms, had not been ashamed to persecute the Roman Catholics. The address of the City of London denouncing the Quebec bill, appealed to this feeling. This bill presented popery in a most odious form. For it was believed to have been passed with a view to organize a province of French Catholics under an arbitrary government, the mere instrument of the crown to lower over and to control the long hitherto undefined frontier of the British colonists. "It is necessary," was the avowal in England, "to con-

* Put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue.—*Num.* xv. 38.

ciliate the affections of the Canadians, and thereby induce them to assist administration in COERCING AMERICA."

In this light Congress had placed it before the people of England and America. Thus, even without a misguiding bigotry, it was a measure to enlist all the jealousies and resentments of the British colonists.

While Canada was a province of France its laws and customs were of course in force, and were regulated in conformity with the genius and disposition of a despotic government. When it fell under the dominion of Great Britain, these laws gave place to the milder influence of those of England. All persons settling there, were, by a proclamation of the crown, assured a full enjoyment of the rights of British subjects. By this act, that proclamation and the government exercised under it, were annulled after the first of January, seventeen hundred and seventy-five.

It created a legislative council appointed by the crown, holding office during its pleasure. There was to be no representation of the people. The French laws were restored, and a power reserved to alter these laws at will. In civil cases, the French laws were to govern, there was to be no trial by jury. This was only to be had in criminal prosecutions. A proposal to give a jury at the option of the parties, and the protection of the habeas corpus act, were both rejected.

The Roman Catholic clergy were to have the legal enjoyment of their estates and of the tithes paid them by the Catholics.

The support of the Protestant clergy was left to be at the discretion of the crown. This government was extended by this act beyond the existing limits of the frozen province far on to the temperate regions watered by the Illinois.

Hamilton met the popular feeling by publishing, at this time, his "Remarks on the Quebec bill."

They were brief and forcible. The first appearing on the fifteenth of June, seventy-five, in a close examination of the terms of the act, commented on the character of this bill, which placed the laws and government of the province under the sole discretion of the prince; conferred on him the most extraordinary and dangerous prerogative, that of creating courts of criminal, civil, and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and appointing temporary judges, whose commissions were revocable at pleasure; and that of making the trial by jury dependent on the will of the provincial legislature; thus showing that an arbitrary government had been established in that extensive region.

The purport of the second number, was to prove that the church of Rome had the sanction of a legal establishment in that province. It is an able refutation of an essay, which professed to show, that by this act, the catholic religion was merely *tolerated;* and giving a very precise and accurate definition of an established religion, it deduces clearly, from the terms of the act, that the Catholic religion is placed on the footing of a regular establishment, while the Protestant is "left entirely destitute and unbefriended."

The dangers to their Protestant neighbors of the vicinity of a colony of Roman Catholics, allured in great numbers by the favor of government, with a dependent clergy, disposed to support absolute power, are strongly portrayed, and an earnest appeal is made to the jealous feelings of the Protestant colonies.

These essays are an interesting specimen of the early reach of thought, and precision of language, which were afterwards disclosed by him in so remarkable a degree.

The recommendation by Congress of a general organ-

ization of the militia, and the near approach of a detachment from Connecticut under Wooster, quickened the spirit of the patriots of New York. Hamilton, now seeing that war approaching he had early desired as a sphere of distinction, joined while in college a volunteer corps of Major Fleming, formerly an adjutant in the British service, an exact disciplinarian. Under his command, he acquired some knowledge of the rudiments of a military education, and became expert in its simpler details.*

This corps met each morning for exercise in the church yard of St. George's chapel. They assumed the name of "Hearts of Oak," † and under their green uniforms and leathern caps, bearing the ominous inscription of "Freedom or death," felt the pulsations of the coming contest. Of it were Hamilton's personal friends, Nicholas Fish, afterwards distinguished in the assault at Yorktown, and Robert Troup, who served in the northern department and received the thanks of Congress.

An incident of this time gave them the first hint of danger. While engaged in removing some cannon from the Battery, a boat of the Asia, man-of-war, approached, as was supposed, to prevent its removal. A musket wantonly fired from the boat, was returned by a volley. A few guns opened from the ship. The drums on the Battery sounded the alarm, and forth came a broadside from the Asia, wounding a few citizens and injuring private dwellings.

Hamilton was present at this exciting scene, and was thus associated, in the minds of the people, with the first act of resistance to the first act of violence offered to the province.

* Troup to Pickering.

† A song under this title, composed by David Garrick, was often sung during the Revolution.—*Songs and Ballads of the Revolution*, 47.

A violent commotion was the consequence of this attack. The king's store was broken open and plundered, and the Provincial Congress invited the Connecticut troops to repair to the camp near New York to protect the inhabitants. Liberty boys, meanwhile, traversed the streets, menacing every conspicuous adherent of the governor.

In the height of their excitement they approached the college, to seize the person of its loyal president, Doctor Cooper. Hamilton and Troup ascended the steps of the porch, and fearing some excess, to give time to the president to escape, Hamilton addressed the mob, expostulating with them "on the impropriety of their conduct, and the disgrace they were bringing on the cause of liberty, of which they professed to be the champions." He thus diverted their attention, until the affrighted clergyman, who, at first imagining he was exciting the mob, exclaimed from an upper window, "Don't listen to him, gentlemen, he is crazy, he is crazy," took refuge in the ship-of-war.*

By a similar exhibition of rare youthful firmness, he interposed with a concourse of people known as "Travis' mob," and turned their rage from Thurman, a respectable merchant, whose conduct, as one of a committee, had incurred their wrath, and whose life was threatened.

Such was the distempered feeling of this city, that the royalists, who had fled for safety from the other colonies to New York, were compelled to leave it, and Tryon, the last royal governor, a man of courage, fearful of the mob, was preparing to depart. Under a threat, that if his person were seized, his majesty's ships would compel his release, he asked a guarantee for his safety. Not being satisfied, he went on board the Halifax packet.

The press of Rivington, the tory printer, was the last

* Troup to Pickering.

object of violence. By occasionally printing for the popular side, he had preserved some appearance of neutrality, but as the controversy ripened, he took open part with the royalists. A body of horse from Connecticut with Sears at their head, came into the city, and at dusk rifled his types. Indignant at this attack upon the freedom of the press, which he felt was to be the great instrument of his own usefulness, Hamilton renewed his appeal in behalf of order, offering to unite with a party of citizens to pursue the intruders, and recapture the types. The Provincial Congress remonstrated with the governor of Connecticut at this unlicensed entrance into their province. On their return, the party carried with them to New Haven the mayor of the royal borough of Westchester, and Seabury, author of the "Westchester Farmer's" letters.

CHAPTER IV.

This violation of the press was prompted by the distrust of Sears, who had withdrawn to Connecticut, of the councils in New York, at times showing the impress of the popular feeling, then relapsing into submission.*

Schuyler, pointing out the fatal consequences of abandoning Ticonderoga and Crown Point, urged them to forward troops. "Our troops," they told him, "can be of no service to you. They have no arms, clothing or ammunition. The officers no commissions, the treasury no money, ourselves in debt. We will remove difficulties as fast as we can and send you soldiers, whenever the men we have raised are entitled to that name." At his instance, they now ordered an artillery company to be formed,† and soon after adopted a plan for organizing the militia of the State—each company to furnish minute men to be subject to the articles of war established by the Continental Congress, and to a penalty for absence from duty. Power was given to impress arms in the hands of private citizens, and, at the instance of the General Congress, mounted

* Sears called on Connecticut to raise a regiment for the express purpose of expelling the tories from New York, Nov. 28, 1775.

† The uniform of this company was to be "blue, faced with buff,"—said to be the first official designation of a uniform in this country.

men were to be stationed on the public roads to give intelligence.

Schuyler also pressed them to strengthen the works on the Hudson River. "Every object, as to importance, sinks almost to nothing when put in competition with that." Little was done. News arrived that German mercenaries were coming, and looking to the probability of their city being again taken possession of, the Provincial Congress gave an assurance of protection to Tryon if he would return; avowing "their unshaken loyalty to their sovereign." They deprecated the destination thither of General Lee with troops, lest it should induce an attack upon the city. The provincial forces then counted about six hundred men.

In the mean time, the great Council of the colonies were acting with a clearer vision of the future.* The expenditure of millions had given them importance and influence, and they began to look at their finances. Such had been the credit of the several colonial emissions, guardedly issued and carefully redeemed, that the possibility of discredit to those of the united colonies had scarcely been imagined. The improvidence which had been a means of power, it began to be seen, must have a check; and a committee of accounts and claims, to consist of a member from each colony, was appointed, to whom all accounts "against the Continent" were to be referred.

In consequence of instructions from Rhode Island,† armed vessels were to be fitted out "for the protection and defence of the united colonies," or, in the language of that State "for carrying on the war effectively, and

* September 13, 1775.

† August 26, 1775. Stated to have been prepared and presented by Samuel Ward, a delegate from that colony.

building an American fleet." All captured British armed vessels and transports were to be forfeited. The colonies were requested to institute admiralty courts with jury trials, subject to an appeal to Congress or to such persons as it should appoint for hearing the appeals, thus having a national prize court in view. The captures by private armed vessels were to enure to the owners; those by public armed vessels, one third to the captors, the residue to the colony by which they were fitted. Thus the fleet, as was the army, would be of the separate colonies. But it being necessary that it should be controlled by Congress, rules and regulations were soon after established, chiefly taken from the English code, for "the regulation of the navy of the united colonies." In the same view, officers were appointed by Congress, Hopkins of Rhode Island being commissioned "commander-in-chief of the fleet."

A "new army" was to be raised, "intended to lie before Boston," to be paid by the General Congress; and battalions of troops for the defence of North Carolina and Georgia.

New Hampshire was recommended to call "a full and free representation of the people to form a government to exist *during the present disputes*," which recommendation, ere the close of the year, was extended to South Carolina and to Virginia.

Another emission of bills of credit was ordered to be sunk by the several colonies according to their quotas, for which "the Thirteen United Colonies were pledged," and, progressive to the final result, Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina were authorized to export their produce every where, except to Great Britain and her dependencies, and in return to import "salt."

A committee had been appointed to proceed to Canada to induce the Canadians "to accede to the Union" and to

send delegates to the Congress, assuring them of their purpose to obtain for them the blessings of a free government; and that they "hold sacred the rights of conscience, and the free enjoyment of their religion." But how could be appreciated the blessings of liberty by a people shrouded in ignorance, and happy in the torpor of a passive obedience?

It was in the hope of aid from the Canadians, or, at least, of their neutrality, that Schuyler had been ordered to advance into that province, "badly disciplined and supplied as his army was." Roused for a moment by the presence of the colonial troops, the poor peasantry contributed their little aids, but the Catholic clergy, won by the recent Quebec act, preferred the English sway; and their influence with their votaries was decisive.*

Earnest as Schuyler's efforts were, they were too late. A vigorous incursion, immediately after the capture of the posts on Champlain, might have been successful. But the time had passed, and the unsuccessful assault upon Quebec was only signalized by the gallantry of the combatants and by the fall of Montgomery, deplored as a national calamity.

Elsewhere the scene was brighter. The heights near Boston were occupied by a besieging army under Washington, if that might be called an army, a concourse of men, reasoning upon every order, and discussing every movement, crumbling to pieces and being renewed within musket shot of their enemy. Yet that army, by the conduct and imposing presence of their commander, now in-

* Colonel Hazen to Schuyler. The clergy "are unanimous, though privately, against our cause, and I have too much reason to fear many of them, with other people of some consequence, have carried on a correspondence the whole winter with General Carleton in Quebec, and are now plotting our destruction."—*Washington's Writings*, iii. 302.

spired to duty and moulded to service, though poorly supplied with the necessaries of war, were closely pressing the disciplined, well-provided troops under Howe, with whom the question was arising of a defeat or a retreat.

Nor would Washington, as ardent as he was a cautious soldier, have permitted it to be long a question. He proposed to invade the invaders. "No opportunity can present itself earlier than my wishes." But a council of war this time happily objected. The effusion of more blood was prevented by the evacuation of Boston.*

While these events were passing, the Continental Congress took the final stand of a severance from Great Britain, a design hastened by the fatuitous policy of her arms. For, though the unauthorized acts of its officers, it seemed as if she had decided to pass an electric shock along the whole nerve line of the colonies.

On the first day of the new year, anticipating attacks upon the Carolinas and Virginia, Congress urged upon them "a vigorous defence and opposition." The same day, Dunmore, secure on shipboard, signalized the predatory warfare he had begun by reducing Norfolk, the chief town of Virginia, to ashes. Indignant at this wanton attack upon his native State, Washington wrote, "I hope my countrymen (of Virginia) will rise superior to any losses the whole navy of Great Britain can bring on them, and that the destruction of Norfolk and threatened devastation of other places, will have no other effect than to UNITE the whole country in one INDISSOLUBLE BOND against a nation which seems to be lost to every sense of virtue, and those feelings which distinguish a civilized people from the most barbarous savages. A few more of such flaming arguments as were exhibited at Falmouth and Norfolk, added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning con-

* March 17, 1776.

tained in the pamphlet 'Common Sense,' will not leave numbers at a loss to decide upon the propriety of a separation." This wanton violence is the more marked, as Dunmore's force was chiefly composed of the disaffected and of slaves, by the fact, that Congress was at this moment framing recommendations to deal kindly with the misled, to enlighten them as to the justice and necessity of the opposition to "ministerial tyranny," and, in despite of the "execrable barbarity" of the enemy, "to continue mindful that humanity ought to distinguish the brave; to take care that no page in the annals of America be stained by a recital of any action which justice or Christianity may condemn; and to rest assured, that whenever retaliation may be necessary, this Congress will undertake the disagreeable task."

The only subjects, as to which the supremacy of Great Britain was still admitted by the colonies, were, a community of war, and peace, and the regulation of trade. Her policy, now disclosed, to make war upon them in the most odious form, and to put an end to their trade, removed the only grounds of allegiance, or motives to longer connection.

The speech of the king to Parliament stated his readiness "to receive the submission of the colonies, and to restore them, on their return to their allegiance, to the free exercise of their trade and commerce."

Fox, pointing to the premier, declared, "the noble lord has lost a whole continent." Burke advised him, "no longer to make England appear like a porcupine armed at all points with acts of Parliament, oppressive to the freedom and trade of America, but to meet the colonists with open arms." He offered a bill "for composing the troubles." It was rejected by a vote of two-thirds of the Commons;*

* The only persons permitted to be present at this debate were four women of quality and a few foreigners.—*Am. Archives.*

and an act prohibiting all trade and intercourse during the present rebellion passed without a division. A protest of the Lords shows its character. That it rendered captured property the property of the captors. It considered the colonies as a foreign nation; and the declaring war against them had a direct tendency to effect an entire and permanent separation. It encouraged the navy to make an indiscriminate prey of the property of all English subjects trading with them, It obliged the unhappy men made captives in this predatory war to bear arms against their families, friends and country; and after being plundered themselves, to become accomplices in plundering their brethren.

Preparations of war followed, assuming the odious form of subsidizing foreign troops. A negotiation opened to hire twenty thousand Russians was thwarted by another power,* but treaties were concluded in January with Brunswick and Hesse-Cassel, the former to supply four thousand three hundred men, the latter twelve thousand.†

Amid all their injuries, this was regarded by the colonists as the greatest enormity. In the minds of a vast majority all thoughts of accommodation with them were at an end.

Having granted bounties for the enlistment of troops, and voted another emission of bills, Congress proceeded carefully towards the unavoidable result. In the mean time, mindful of the humanity recommended by them, they resolved that "Indians should not be employed in the armies of the United States before their national councils

* American Archives.

† Each foot soldier was valued at 30 crowns banco, or four and nine-pence three farthings English. Each man killed to be paid for at the rate of the levy money. Annual subsidies were granted.

had consented; nor then, without the express approbation of Congress."

The recent act of Great Britain making open war had now come to their knowledge. It was met by a declaration of wrongs,* and by resolutions permitting the fitting out of private armed cruisers "on the enemies of these United Colonies," declaring the captures lawful prizes, and for the fortifications of ports for the protection of these cruisers.

This declaration of war preceded a short time an act of the highest necessity. It authorized a commerce with all countries "not subject to the king of Great Britain," excepting in staves and casks and East India teas, liable to such duties as then were or might be laid by any of the colonies, leaving open future commercial regulations and prohibiting the importation of slaves,† thus associating this great act of humanity with the first national act of trade.

The power of committees to regulate prices except "of green tea" was rescinded, and the committee on the state of the nation began to deliberate on the question of independence.

Wisely had been waited evidence of the unequivocal necessity of the measure, and a clear expression of the determination of the American people to become one nation. Personal vanity and pretension have sought to cast a shade on the prudence of the middle States, but events soon showed that the men of calmest counsels were not the least firm in purpose or intrepid of spirit. ‡

The rising light of the revolution has been seen.

* March 23.

† "*Resolved*, That no slaves be imported into any of the thirteen United Colonies." April 6, 1776.

‡ See Life of John Adams, by C. A. Adams, i. 211, 212.

Amid heavy clouds it was breaking into perfect day. Relieved by the repeal of the stamp act, this future seemed for a moment to have been less present, but the opposition to the revenue acts forced it full upon the view. "There seems to be," Hamilton writes as early as February, seventy-five, "there seems to be already a jealousy of our dawning splendor. It is looked upon as portentous of approaching INDEPENDENCE. The boundless extent of territory we possess; the wholesome temperament of our climate; the luxuriance and fertility of our soil; the variety of our products; the rapidity of our population; the industry of our countrymen; and the commodiousness of our ports, naturally lead to a suspicion of INDEPENDENCE." Then predicting the success of the attempt he observed, "The *disjunction* of these colonies from Great Britain and the acquisition of a free trade with them, are objects of too inviting a complexion to suffer these kingdoms" (France and Spain) "to remain sole spectators of the contention. If they found us inclined to throw ourselves upon their protection, they would eagerly embrace the opportunity to weaken their antagonist and strengthen themselves."—"The present seemingly pacific and friendly disposition of the French is merely a piece of *finesse*, intended to dupe administration into some violent measures with the colonies, that they may improve them to their own advantage. They would undoubtedly take every clandestine method to introduce among us supplies of those things which we stood in need of to carry on the dispute."* This prediction of clandestine aid was now being fulfilled, pursuant to the advice of Turgot in the cabinet at Versailles, "Let France avoid open hostilities, but privately aid the Americans with arms, ammunition and money."

* Hamilton's Works, ii. 49, 120. Feb. 5, 1775.

In New Jersey, an organization was proposed of the present colonies, adding three others, and altering their boundaries, under a general Congress to be elected by the ballots of qualified voters, including widows, and exempting from taxation persons not entitled to vote.*

Three months later, the people of North Carolina, fired by the blood shed at Lexington, took the decisive step of declaring at Mecklenburg,† "We dissolve the political bands which have connected us with our mother country—we absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British crown—declare ourselves a free and independent people, are, and of right ought to be, a sovereign, self-governing association, under the control of no power other than that of our God, and the general government of Congress—to the maintenance of which Independence we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor."‡ Words imperishable, richer than the rich gold of their hills and valleys.

Ere the close of this year, a writer with all the solemnity of religious feeling and fresh hope of the festive season,§ wrote in Philadelphia on Christmas eve, "We may believe the Divine counsel to the united colonies is, Now is your time to form one general plan of an American union and constitution which shall dissolve only with the last breath of your expiring liberty; which under my protection will form an everlasting barrier against tyrannical encroachments—an American empire of liberty." "The rattlesnake on the drum of a marine, 'Don't tread on me,' among other its habits, is solitary, and associates with her kind only when it is necessary for their preservation. In *winter* the warmth of a *number together* will

* American Archives. "Essex, Feb. 26," 1775. † May 31, 1775.
‡ Appendix B. § "Salus populi," Dec. 27, 1775.

preserve their lives, while singly they would probably perish." *

New Hampshire exclaimed, "Thanks be to Heaven! There is yet a way open to us, not only to escape the threatened ruin, but to become a happy, wealthy, powerful, respectable people. By declaring an immediate independency, proclaiming a neutrality, opening and declaring free all our ports, promoting manufactories," wise words from the far East.

Nathaniel Greene, passing from the plough and the forge where his Quaker father had taught him virtue and labor, to that high place for which nature intended him, writes in the opening year of seventy-six from Rhode Island, where he had harangued, collected, and was drilling troops, with all the sublimity of the theme and of his own true spirit. "Permit me to recommend from the sincerity of my heart, ready to bleed in my country's cause, a declaration of independence; and call upon the world and the great God who governs it, to witness the necessity, propriety, and rectitude of it. You stand the representatives, not of America only, but of the whole world, the friends of liberty and supporters of human nature." † "Common sense," in language plain to every mind, was now urging independence.‡ "Administration," another writes, "has now fairly dissolved the dangerous tie. Execrated will be he by the latest posterity who again joins the fatal chord. It is the only step that can bring the contest to a speedy and happy issue." §

"Our plan is commerce," was the language of the young merchant of New York, "and that will secure us the peace and friendship of all Europe, because it is the

* American Archives, iv. 469.

† Jan. 4, 1776. To Samuel Ward, in Congress. ‡ By Thomas Paine.

§ Feb. 3, 1776.

interest of all Europe to have America a free port." A system of government by State and General Congress was proposed. "But where is the king of America? He reigns above. Let it be that in America the law is king." *

Connecticut was told to make use of her charter government as a popular government, carrying the elective principle to its fullest extent, and upon that basis to form a continental government.

"What," was asked by the Virginia planter, "if we should be obliged to encumber ourselves with double the load of our present expenses. A few years of free and universal trade would enable us to redeem all." †

Looking to the hoped change, it was observed, "A republican government hath more grandeur in it than a kingly one. Every honest delegate is more than a monarch." "Can America be happy under a government of her own is short and simple? As happy as she please. She hath a blank sheet to write upon. Put it not off too long." ‡ "What do arguments avail against plain facts?" was again urged by the young statesman of New York. "Upon whom do the continental bills that pass current through the country depend? By whom are they emitted? We are independent in fact." § Judge Drayton in South Carolina charged a grand jury fully on the doctrines of allegiance and abdication, and drew a part of the outline of the declaration of independence in its very words. ‖ "It is my duty boldly to declare the law, that George the Third, king of Great Britain, has abdicated the government, and that the throne is thereby vacant; that is, he has no authority over us, and we owe no obedience

* "Plain Hints." March 13, 1776. † A Planter, April 6, 1776.
‡ Cato, No. 3. April 20, 1776.
§ To inhabitants of New York. April 11.
‖ American Archives, v. 1026. April 23, 1776.

to him." "The Almighty created America to be independent of Great Britain."

"Considering the perfidy and obstinacy of the king, is not," asked New York, "a declaration of independence of the crown as just a measure now, as a declaration of independence upon the Parliament was some years ago?" *

"My hand and heart are full of it," wrote the clear, strong-minded Hawley from among the hills of western Massachusetts. "There will be no abiding UNION without it. When the colonies come to be pressed with taxes, they will divide and crumble to pieces. Will a government stand on recommendations? Can we subsist and support our trading people without trade? It appears more and more every day in the country and army that we cannot. Nay, without a real continental government our army will overrun us; and people will, by and by, sooner than you may be aware of, call for their old constitutions. For God's sake, let there be a full revolution, or all is done in vain. Independency and a well-planned government will save us. God bless you. Amen and amen." †

"We have passed the rubicon, there is no retreat," was told to hesitating men in Pennsylvania. "My prayer is, that America may rise triumphant, blossom as the rose, and swell with increasing splendor like the growing beauties of the spring, bearing in her right hand the great charter of salvation—the Gospel of the Heavenly Jesus; and in her left the unfolded volumes of peace, liberty and truth." ‡

And now Rhode Island, with the wise boldness of her tolerant founder, and in the free spirit a wide, now restricted, commerce had cultured, repealed the act "for

* American Archives, New York, April 25, 1776.

† Joseph Hawley to Elbridge Gerry, May 1.—*American Archives.*

‡ Cosmopolitan, No. x. May.—*Ibid.*

more effectual securing allegiance to his majesty," and enacted oaths of allegiance to "the governor and colony of Rhode Island and Providence plantations."

Congress, a mere emanation of the people, felt the strong tide of public feeling. On the third of March the secret committee instructed Silas Deane to inform France, "that if we should, as there is great appearance that we shall, come to a total separation from Great Britain, France would be looked upon as the power whose friendship it would be fittest for us to obtain and to cultivate."

The inducements held out were the benefits of trade. The immediate aids asked were clothing and arms for twenty-five thousand men, with ammunition, and one hundred field-pieces.

As the powers exercised by the Congress were in virtue of commissions from the popular representatives of the several colonies, and revocable by them; and as the organization of a general government would be attended with delay, difficulty and doubt; the immediate step to be taken was the formation of governments by each colony, necessary alike to the protection of their civil rights, and to the exertion of their respective energies in the prosecution of the war. The recommendations to South Carolina and to Virginia had been, to establish governments to effect these objects "during the continuance of the *present disputes*." A larger and farther view was now taken. On the tenth of May, recommendations were made to every colony where no government sufficient to the exigencies of their affairs had been established, "to adopt such government as shall, in the opinion of the representatives of the people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular, and AMERICA IN GENERAL." Thus there was no limitation as to the continuance of these governments; and they were to embrace

the welfare, not merely of the people of each colony, but "of America in general."

The object of this recommendation was stated in a preamble to it which was agreed to five days after.*

Referring to the late act of Parliament excluding the "inhabitants of these united colonies from the protection of the crown," to the entire disregard of their late petition, "to the exertion of the whole force of the kingdom of Great Britain, aided by foreign mercenaries, for the destruction of the good people of these colonies," it stated as irreconcilable to reason and good conscience the taking oaths of allegiance to the crown—the necessity that the exercise of every authority under the crown should be totally suppressed; and that all the powers of government must be exerted, under the authority of the PEOPLE of the colonies, for the preservation of internal peace, virtue, and good order, as well as for the defence of their lives, liberties and properties, against the hostile invasions and cruel depredations of their enemies, and with these views, and for these ends recommended, that governments in each colony be formed. This resolution, ordered to be published,† was in fact a RESOLUTION OF INDEPENDENCE. It had been anticipated and authorized by the instructions of Massachusetts, of South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia and Rhode Island.

On the day of its passage, Virginia, in convention, instructed her delegates to propose to Congress a DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Sanctioned by the instructions of these colonies, warranted by decisive indications of public opinion through the press, enforced by the inconveniences of their inexplicit condition, and prompted by the obvious advantages

* May 15, 1776.

† The committee were John Adams, Rutledge, R. H. Lee.

of open explicit acts, on the seventh of June, three resolutions were presented to Congress for consideration. The *first* resolved, "that these colonies are, and of right ought to be, FREE and INDEPENDENT STATES, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." This resolution was offered by Richard Henry Lee under the recent instructions from Virginia, adopting as her own the very language of her neighbor, North Carolina, and was seconded by Massachusetts. The *second* resolution declared, "that it is expedient to take the most effectual measures for forming foreign alliances," and the *third*, "that a plan of confederation be proposed and transmitted to the respecive colonies, for their approval and adoption."

On the two following days, these resolutions were considered. That of independence, several of the colonies not having yet authorized the measure, was postponed until the first of July. "That no time be lost in case Congress agree thereto," a committee was appointed the next day to prepare a declaration of it. The committee were Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, and Robert R. Livingston of New York.

Committees were also ordered to prepare a form of confederation, and a plan of treaties.

In the interval of their reports, a "Board of War and Ordnance" was established, composed of a committee of Congress, John Adams, Sherman, Harrison, Wilson, E. Rutledge.*

A resolution, believed to have been suggested at head-

* June 13.

quarters, was also adopted. It declared that "all persons abiding within any of the united colonies and deriving protection from its laws, owe allegiance to those laws, and are members of such colony, and also persons passing through it, or sojourning temporarily, and that all such persons levying war against any of the colonies within them, or adhering to the king of Great Britain or other enemies of it, or any of them, within it, giving him or them aid or comfort, "guilty of TREASON." The legislatures of the several States were recommended to pass laws for punishing such treasons, and also persons counterfeiting or passing counterfeit continental bills of credit.

Three days after, on the twenty-eighth of June, a draught of a declaration of independence was read and laid on the table.

On the first of July, all the colonies, excepting New York, having now authorized the measure, the resolution of independence was considered in committee, reported to the House, and passed the next day, when the Declaration of Independence was considered. It was approved on the fourth by eleven States, the assent of New York being deferred for want of power in its delegates until the fifteenth, when they, being duly empowered, also gave its sanction.

Being signed by all the members of Congress with two exceptions,* it was duly authenicated.

This national manifesto was hailed with exultation throughout the United States. Washington ordered it to be published at the head of every division of the troops. In New England that office was performed by the clergy,

* January, 1777. Thomas McKean subsequently added his signature. John Dickinson withheld his signature. The resolution of the N. York convention of 9th of July, was reported by John Jay, and unanimously approved.

who, on the previous Sunday, had read it to their people from their desks.

Rejoicings were heard in every city, town and hamlet, and the great Presbyterian seat of learning resorted to by the youth of North America, Nassau Hall, known as Princeton College, was illuminated.

The New York convention ordered it to be published with beat of drum. The patriots of that city exhibited their zeal by mutilating the equestrian statue of the king, and laying its fragments in the dust, soon to be converted into bullets.

Such was the general feeling, but there were many, some from unworthy, others from noble motives, unwilling to abandon their allegiance, and anxious to see restored the power of the crown.

CHAPTER V.

England as yet had made no advance towards her object. Canada she held, but she had evacuated Massachusetts, and had failed in her attempt upon Charleston. Her marauding incursions had only exasperated the colonists, confirming their opposition. Finding the resistance more determined than she had been led to expect, her monarch resolved to make an effort commensurate with her great resources. Strengthened by his German auxiliaries, he decided to throw a powerful army into New York, and thus terminate the contest in a single campaign. One body landed on the seaboard, co-operating with another advancing from Canada, would, it was supposed, defy all opposition and dissever the colonies. At the same time an entire suspension of trade was to impoverish, and reduce them to submission. In this view she was complaining to France and Spain of the illicit commerce with her colonial ports.

Relying upon their maritime skill and prowess to force a trade, the only coveted supplies throughout the United States were instruments of war. The only cry was "powder."

Foreseeing that the course of events was leading to an open rupture, Hamilton, during the previous winter, applied himself to the study of arms; and before any steps were taken to organize a regular force, had by great assi-

duity, made such progress as books and the instruction of a British bombardier would enable him, in the knowledge of pyrotechnics and gunnery. Thus prepared, he asked the command of the company of artillery ordered to be raised by the convention of New York.

Doubts of his fitness being entertained, he was examined, his friend McDougall being present,* and on the fourteenth of March, seventy-six, was appointed "CAPTAIN of the provincial company of artillery." He "recruited his men, and with the remnant of the second and last remittance from his relatives in Santa Cruz having equipped"† them, his company was attached to General Scott's brigade.‡

His first letters to the convention relate to discriminations between the State and Continental troops. These were followed by a communication in August, asking them to fill a vacancy, in which he suggested the policy of advancing officers in succession from the lowest grades. "I would beg the liberty," he wrote, "warmly to recommend to your attention the first sergeant in my company —a man highly deserving of notice and preferment. He has discharged his duty in his present station with uncommon fidelity, assiduity, and expertness; he is a very good disciplinarian, possesses the advantage of having seen a good deal of service in Germany, and has a tolerable share of common sense. In a word, I verily believe he will make an excellent lieutenant, and his advancement will be a great encouragement and benefit to my company in particular, and will be an animating example to all men of merit to whose knowledge it comes."

This suggestion, of which the important principle, not admitted in the routine system of Great Britain, has since

* American Archives. † Mulligan's Narrative.

‡ Journal of New York Provincial Congress.

had a powerful influence in advancing the military service of other countries, was adopted by the convention. The brave sergeant was promoted to a lieutenancy, and rising to the command of a company, Captain Thompson fell in the battle of Springfield at the head of his men, having gallantly repulsed a desperate charge of the enemy. Acting upon this suggestion, a general resolution was published by the convention, assuring "*promotion* to such privates and non-commissioned officers as should distinguish themselves." Hamilton seems not to have permitted the duties of his military profession to divert him wholly from the prosecution of his previous studies. The "pay book" of his company gives an interesting exhibition of his train of thought. With minutes of works to be read, are found notes relating to commerce; to the "rates of exchange;" the "money circulation," the "proportions in it of gold and silver;" "the par between land and labor;" the "increase of population;" "tables of observations exhibiting the probabilities of life." Among these is found this striking inquiry, indicating how early his mind was directed to the organization of a general government with effective independent powers. "Quere, Would it not be advisable to let all taxes, even those imposed by the States, be collected by persons of congressional appointment; and would it not be advisable to pay the collectors so much per cent. on the sums collected?"* This is the initiative idea of a general government, truly such, which he first proposed to Congress, and earnestly advocated. Among his papers, there also remains a carefully digested outline of a plan for the political and commercial history of British America compiled at this time.

Thus early were collected those stores of knowledge which his powerful intellect soon after applied to the con-

* Works of Hamilton, i. pp. 4–7.

dition of the rising republic, and rapidly matured into results of extensive utility.

But the term of these studies was soon at an end. On the same day that the resolution of independence was passed by Congress, General Howe, brother of the Lord Howe who fell on the border of Lake George, succeeding General Gage in the chief command, landed in the vicinity of New York.

This important post had been confided to different officers in rapid succession, Schuyler, Lee, Stirling, until Washington in April made it his head-quarters. He found some works completed, others in progress. His troops, many of them badly armed, were in number eight thousand fit for duty, thus reduced by detachments to Canada, and by retirements from the service.

Regarding New York as "the grand magazine of America," he immediately pressed for reinforcements; urged longer enlistments; called for funds; and indicated the necessity of measures to control the disaffected.

His requests were promptly acceded to. A body of fourteen thousand men were ordered to join him, and a flying camp was to be formed of ten thousand men called the "new levies," to operate in the middle colonies. But the men to compose this force were not obtained. The enemy were now strengthened by the return of the detachment under Sir Henry Clinton, grandson of the Earl of Lincoln, and son of the former obnoxious governor of New York, after his repulse at Charleston; and ere long, by the arrival of a large fleet under Lord Howe, conveying British regiments and their auxiliaries, which swelled the entire number to thirty thousand disciplined troops.

Tryon exulted in the prospect of an immediate reduction of the colonies. He wrote Lord George Germain in the beginning of August, "I expect by the courage and

strength of this noble army, tyranny will be crushed and legal government restored."

Washington was at the same moment discountenancing the jealousies which had arisen between the troops from the Eastern and Southern provinces, now first assembled under "the Great Union flag."* "Let all distinctions of nations, countries and provinces, be lost in the generous contest who shall behave with the utmost courage against the enemy, and the most kindness and good humor to each other."—"They have now landed on Long Island. Remember, officers and soldiers, that you are freemen, fighting for the blessings of liberty. Remember how your courage and spirit have been despised and traduced by your cruel invaders, though they have found by dear experience what a few brave men, contending in their own land, and in the best of causes, can do against hirelings and mercenaries. Be cool, but determined. Do not fire at a distance, but wait for orders from your officers. It is the general's express order, that if any man attempt to skulk, lie down, or retreat without orders, he be instantly shot down as an example." †

The reinforcements from Maryland and Pennsylvania now came in, moved forward gayly to their post, giving promise of the good courage they displayed.

The defenceless condition of New York, at this time boasting its million of inhabitants, a great centre of nations, then containing about twenty thousand souls, was the result of the half-peace, half-war, hitherto waged.

* It combined "the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew united (the distinctive emblem of the united kingdoms of Great Britain), with a field composed of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, called the 'Great Union Flag.'"—*History of the National Flag, by Schuyler Hamilton, Capt. by brevet, U. S. A., and aide-de-camp to Gen. Winfield Scott.*

† August 23, 1776.

The access to it seaward was open, nor were there means to prevent it. It was at the mercy of a fleet. But the approach of a land force might have been rendered difficult. It could only be by way of Long Island, where, intrenched works thrown up along its eminences, though manned by inexperienced troops, would have presented formidable obstacles. A resistance such as Lexington and Bunker Hill, would have sustained the confidence of the people, and again have checked the enemy.

If baffled here, it would only have remained to them to assail the more defenceless parts of the country, while New England and New York, holding their chief resources for opportune moments in aid of the Southern States, might have stricken a decisive blow in Canada.

Probably in these views, the heights of Brooklyn, then a small village on the eastern bank of the Sound, opposite New York, had been in part intrenched. Though the natural advantages of this post were not few, the extensive line of approach rendered a division of the defensive force unavoidable, and being assailable in several points, the utmost vigilance was requisite. Unhappily, General Greene, charged with the command upon Long Island, and familiar with the ground, was taken ill, and it was transferred to Putnam. A few horsemen, employed as scouts in the absence of cavalry, would have prevented a surprise. This precaution was not taken,* and notwithstanding recent written instructions to him, that "the woods should be

* General Sullivan wrote, Whitemarsh, 25th Oct., 1777: "Gen. Putnam had taken the command from me four days before the action. * * * I was uneasy about a road, through which, *I had often foretold*, that the enemy would come, but *could not persuade others to be of my opinion.* I went to the hill near Flatbush to reconnoitre, and with a picket of four hundred men, was surrounded by the enemy, *who had advanced by the very road I had foretold*, and which I had paid horsemen fifty dollars for patrolling by night, while I had the command, for I had no foot for the purpose."

secured by abatis where necessary, to make the enemy's approach as difficult as possible," a small patrol of foot was only ordered, which was surprised and captured. A pass that opened to the intrenched works was "unoccupied," and while the advances of the left and centre of the British were disputed by raw troops with great gallantry, Sir Henry Clinton, by a circuitous route, approached and seized this pass.

At break of day the British columns had crossed the ridge, which with a gentle eastern slope faces the ocean, inclining gradually on the west towards the city, through this pass, and were advanced within a short distance of the American works. Nothing remained but to retreat. Under cover of a fog, this retreat was effected in the dark, Washington personally superintending. The whole detachment crossed the Sound in boats suddenly provided, with the loss of a few stragglers, ere the enemy discovered the movement. Captain Hamilton, it is related,* brought up the rear, losing his baggage and a field-piece.

The result of this action disclosed to Washington the weakness and disorganization of his command, and filled his mind with a sad presage of the future. He writes to Congress, "with the deepest concern I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops." But the inertness of Howe, permitting the escape of an army within his grasp, was also disclosed.

The pregnant question as to the course to be pursued must be decided. In reply to apprehensions, Washington had declared, prior to this engagement, that "nothing but the last necessity, and such as should justify me to the whole world, would induce me to give orders to fire the city." He now wrote to Congress, "Till of late I had no

* Mulligan's Narrative.

doubt in my own mind of defending this place; nor would I have yet if the men would do their duty, but this I despair of. If we should be obliged to abandon the town, ought it to stand as winter-quarters for the enemy? They would derive great conveniences from it on the one hand, and much property would be destroyed on the other. It is an important question, but will admit of little time for deliberation. At present, I dare say, the enemy mean to prevent it if they can. If Congress, therefore, should resolve upon the destruction of it, the resolution should be a profound secret, as the knowledge of it will make a capital change in their plans."

Far better would it have been, had New York been consigned to flames. The disaffected, who held throughout the contest the seaboard of this State in abeyance, driven forth, would have felt in their wanderings there would be no parley with them. England would have lost all the advantages of this central position, and might have been stayed in her attempt to subjugate, by this evidence of desperate determination. "I wish," wrote Jay soon after, "our army well stationed in the Highlands, and all the lower country desolated." * Congress not advising this decisive act, the next question was, whether an effort should be made to hold the city. Greene strenuously urged an immediate evacuation. "A general and speedy retreat is absolutely necessary. The honor and interest of America require it; I would burn the city and suburbs. If the enemy gets possession of the city, we can never recover possession without a superior naval force. It will deprive the enemy of an opportunity of barracking their whole army together, which, if they could do it, would be a very great security. It will deprive them of a general market. All these advantages would

* Life of Jay, ii. 7.

result from the destruction of the city, and not one benefit can arise from its preservation that I can conceive." A council of war was called by Washington. They advised the attempt to hold it "a while longer," by a *part of the force*." * On the petition of Greene and six other officers, a second council was called, and a large majority † declared for a removal. The reasons assigned for this decision were such as ought to have governed in the former council.‡ The army was thus rescued from a capitulation. Nor was the decision made too soon. While Washington was removing, ships of war had advanced up both the waters that bound the island of New York, and bodies of the enemy had crossed the Sound and landed at Kipp's bay.§ At their first appearance, a party of militia abandoned their breastworks, and were followed "by two brigades of Putnam's Connecticut troops, in a disorderly retreat, leaving the commander-in-chief, who in vain sought to check them, in great danger of being captured,‖—dastard conduct, only redeemed by that of the following day, when the gallant Knowlton fell.

Washington now took a strong position on the heights of Haerlem, extending his lines across the Island of New York, covered by temporary defences.

At this place Captain Hamilton first attracted his observation. On the inspection of an earthwork he was

* Washington's Writings, iii. 85.

† The dissenting voices were Generals George Clinton, Heath, and Spencer.—*Ibid.* 92.

‡ Minutes of Council, Aug. 29, 1776.

§ "It crossed in open flat-boats, filled with soldiers standing erect, their arms all glittering in the sunbeams. They approached the British fleet in Kipp's Bay, in the form of a crescent, caused by the force of the tide breaking the intended line of boat after boat."—*Watson's Annals of City of New York*, p. 325.

‖ Washington's Writings, iii. 94—note.

throwing up, the commander-in-chief entered into conversation with him, invited him to his tent, and received an impression of his military talent.

It became the policy of the Americans, while holding the enemy in check, to draw him into separate detachments, in successive skirmishes to profit of their superior aim and activity, and of their better knowledge of the country, and to keep up its confidence by a system of short and gradual retreats from fastness to fastness—from river beyond river. This policy, which Hamilton is seen to have indicated, their situation in every point of view demanded.

An opposite line of conduct was obviously that of the invader. By instant, bold and rapid movements to hem in his adversary, and force him into immediate general action, assured of victory by his superior numbers, discipline and strategy.

The dispositions contemplated by Washington were modified by a resolution of Congress, by every means to obstruct the navigation of the Hudson. In this view, it was determined to maintain Fort Washington situate on that river, ten miles from New York.

North of that city lies the county of Westchester, bounded on the west by the Hudson, east by the Sound. From each bound rising towards its centre, where a series of hills on either side the deep-seated Bronx continues to the base of the Highland crests. The banks of the Hudson are bold. The borders of the Sound marshy, with frequent inlets and projecting necks or points.

On the lowest of these, Throgs', a body of the enemy landed on the twelfth of October, which, four days after, was followed by Howe, disembarking on another point with the larger part of his army.

Gallant but ineffectual attempts were made to prevent

his progress over the causeways. Seeing the danger of his rear being gained, Washington called a council, who resolved to change their position.

To cover Fort Washington which was strongly garrisoned, and to command the Hudson, the Americans were stationed in detached parties on the ridges along the western banks of the Bronx as far as White Plains, where a camp was being fortified. With a body of men so undisciplined and unprovided, no position could have been more judiciously selected. Were a stand to be made, its natural advantages were great; if not, none afforded a better choice of change. Of the roads passing through it, one was open to Connecticut, another to Dobb's Ferry upon the Hudson to New Jersey, while the higher elevations in the rear offered a retreat of almost absolute security.

Waiting his artillery and baggage, Howe did not move from his several posts near the Sound until the twenty-first of October, when, having been joined by General de Heister with the German mercenaries, and by a corps of light dragoons under Colonel Harcourt, he advanced with great circumspection to a well-guarded station between the eminences on the Bronx and upon the Mamaroneck.

At his approach, Washington gathered in his detached bodies and retired to his previously selected post, east of the Bronx. This, his chief encampment, was on the elevated grounds north of the little village of White Plains, protected by two nearly parallel lines, the first along a road to Tarrytown, the second on the brow of a hill at the junction of two roads leading across the Croton River into the Highlands.

The right wing, lying on a hill side on the road to the west, and flanked by the Bronx, which in its winding course also traversed the rear, was under the command

of Putnam; the left rested upon another hill side upon the road leading to New England, and protected in part by a small upland lake, was in charge of Heath. Though the confidence of the Americans had been raised by several successful skirmishes, Washington wisely doubted their concert and steadiness in a general engagement; and was reconnoitring positions more difficult of access, and better adapted to the kind of warfare he at this time preferred to wage. That he did not retire earlier and farther, was owing to his inadequate means of transporting his many sick, and his military stores.

Activity was not the characteristic of Howe. He idly waited three days within a short distance of his enemy, during which time General Lee came up from King's Bridge with the rear division of the Americans, and Washington was busy strengthening his defences.

Heath, in the mean time, made a skilful disposition to secure the left wing, while to prevent the right being enfiladed, a small party of militia was ordered to occupy a height called "Chatterton's Hill," nearly half a mile south-west of the Bronx, over which was a communication in the rear with the camp by an easy ford.

On the twenty-seventh of October, heavy rolls of cannon from below aroused the Americans to a quicker sense of danger,—perhaps Fort Washington had fallen—and the next day Washington and Lee were early out to select a position less accessible among the numerous hills.

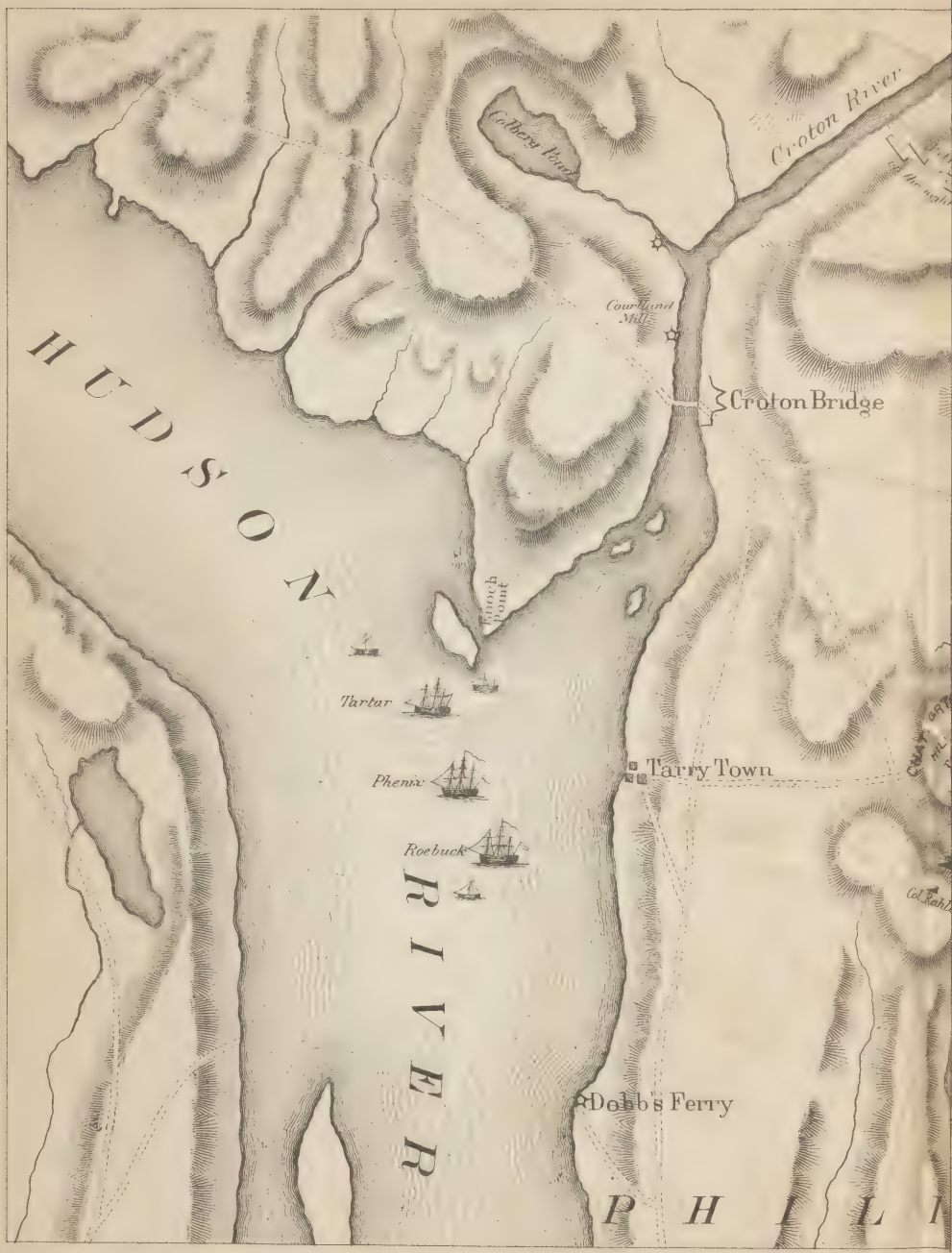
A horseman announced that the enemy had attacked the out-guards, and that the troops were formed for action. Washington galloped to the camp, and so it was. At the dawn of this soft autumnal day, the haze still hanging on the distant heights, Howe in two columns began his march, the right chiefly British under Sir Henry Clinton, the left chiefly Hessians under De Heister. The

chasseurs and light-infantry in advance drove the foremost parties of the Americans back into their intrenchments. The columns then divided, Heister moving to the west, Clinton along the eastern highway to the village, with a few dragoons in front.

The commanding position on Chatterton's Hill attracted the attention of Sir William Howe, who, from its being separated by the Bronx from the right flank of the American intrenchments, supposed its defenders might be captured or dislodged with ease. Orders to effect this were immediately given by De Heister. Seeing this hill was the object of the enemy, Washington ordered Colonel Haslet with his Delaware regiment* to join the militia posted there and to defend it, until McDougall, who had been directed to cover the division under Lee, took the command. His brigade consisted of four regiments, Smallwood's "blues and buffs" from Maryland, Ritzema's of New York, Brooks's Massachusetts militia, and a corps from Connecticut. Attached to it was the single New York company of artillery commanded by Captain Hamilton. The defenders of the hill were now sixteen hundred men, whom McDougall disposed for action—Brooks on the extreme right behind a stone wall, the residue composing the centre and left.

Towards noon, after a reconnaissance and a council, Howe seeing the strong position of Heath, resolved to concentrate his efforts upon McDougall. A battery placed in position now opened an incessant fire upon "Chatterton's Hill," and the enemy's left deployed towards the Bronx flowing at its foot. Rahle then moved forward, forded the river a short distance below, and took possession of an elevation opening upon McDougall's right. A battalion of Hessians was now directed to pass the Bronx above,

* Called "The Blue Hen's Chickens."


Croton River
Colberry Point
Courtland Mill
Croton Bridge
HUDSON
RIVER
Pinock Point
Tartar
Phenix
Roebuck
Tarry Town
Dobb's Ferry
PHILI

BATTLE OF W

A.
Attack on the 28th of October by Brigad.r Gen.l Leslie with the second Brigade of British the 28th & 35th the 5th & 49th Regiments, Rahles Batt.n the Hessian Grenadiers from the Right under Dmop & a party of Light Dragoons.
B.
Chattertons Hill . with Hamiltons Field Pieces . ††
PLAINS
American Army on the 28th of October
WHITE
American Army on the 28th of October
White Plains
Bedford
Upper Road to Connecticut
Byrams Ponds
British Army on the 28th of October
A
the Ford
Army in March early the 28th
Left Column Gen.l Heister
Right Column Gen.l Clinton
Bronx River
P S B U R G

HITE PLAINS.

supported by a brigade under General Leslie, and by the Hessian grenadiers under Count Donop, ordered hither from the right, and to attack the Americans in front.

An hour after noon, the head of the advancing column was on the eastern bank of the Bronx, swollen by recent rains, its bed filled with frequent wood drifts. The Hessians refused to wade the tangled stream, and a temporary bridge was begun.

McDougall saw the hesitation, and instantly Ritzema and Smallwood were ordered onward, and Hamilton to open his artillery upon them as they crossed. He forthwith descended the hill, planting his two field-pieces upon a ledge of rock bearing upon the bridge, and screened from the British guns by a covert of trees. Thence he poured his fire upon the bridge. The effect was instantaneous. The bridge was repeatedly struck. Several of the workmen killed, fell headlong into the rapid stream. The Hessians were in great disorder. Fearing the check, Leslie appealed to the loyalty of the British regiments to follow their commander. Leading them a short distance below, they crossed the little river by a ford, and, resolved to capture Hamilton's guns, rushed up the hill with bayonets fixed. Again and again Hamilton's pieces flashed, riving the ascending columns down to the river's edge, Smallwood discharging repeated rounds of musketry. Leslie's troops reeled, and fell back upon the soldiers moving to his support. The Hessian infantry and Donop's grenadiers now crossed the completed bridge, emulating the impetuous courage of the British troops. The enemy united, formed a line parallel with the Americans, and again rushed up the hill, checked by the warm combat in their determined progress. Rahl now appearing from his covered height, Brooks changed the front of his militia, faced, and threw a volley in upon him. They

reloaded and were about to repeat their fire, when Harcourt's light dragoons, with kettle drums beating and trumpets braying, came charging on. The militia, panic-stricken by the novel sight, fled before the hurrying horse, except a few Massachusetts men, who formed in solid mass, and offering a vain resistance, were sabred or escaped.

A slight diversion was attempted upon the American centre, which ought to have been the point of attack, but a few shot dispersed the uncertain horse.

As soon as the militia were scattered by the British dragoons, a part of McDougall's brigade, most of the infantry, and Hamilton's artillery, were ordered to retire over the hill side towards the road leading in their rear. The hill top being meanwhile gained, the Delaware troops were attacked; a part were driven across the Bronx, the residue, placed by Haslet behind a fence, were firm. Twice the foremost chasseurs and light-infantry were repulsed, when the dragoons, returning from the chase of the flying men, mounted the hill and were again about to charge. Few in number, and despairing of the hill, the militia first, and then Haslet's remaining men retired, joining the troops of New York and Maryland who had formed near by.

Washington, seeing the fierce attack upon the hill, had ordered Putnam with Beall's brigade to the support of its defenders, but coming up too late, he took a position on the plain, the Bronx on his right, serving as a diversion while McDougall marched into the camp. The judicious choice of his position, the precision, rapidity and steadiness of Hamilton's fire, his cool courage in this, the first military action of his life, excited admiration towards a lad of only nineteen years. With the gallant Brooks a lasting friendship was formed, and McDougall, amid his own

well-earned laurels, triumphed in the young soldier for whom he had vouched, and not the less that Scotland was his fatherland.

The determined resistance upon this hill was felt by Howe. This contest, short as it was, had been attended with a loss on each side, of killed and wounded, of about three hundred men.

Howe's right and centre lay upon their arms during the night, the left holding the hill they had won. Washington spent the night throwing up redoubts, felling trees, forming abatis, fraising his breastworks.

So formidable were the defences, Howe deferred his intended assault upon them, waiting the arrival of Lord Percy with his own brigade and part of another, raising in the mean time redoubts to command the American lines. Late on the thirtieth the reinforcements came up, and the next morning an assault was to be made. A storm arising, Howe postponed the attempt.

Washington, while preparing against a sudden onset, was removing his hospital and baggage to the eminences in his rear. The increased strength of the enemy showed no time was to be lost. Having fired several buildings containing forage and stores that could not be removed, he retired in the night of the thirty-first, leaving a rear-guard on the hills and in the woods, and formed his new lines along a chain of rocky heights towards North Castle, facing south, on which, in anticipation of his purpose, earthworks were begun.

The next morning Howe awakened to learn his enemy had decamped. A reconnaissance was ordered, columns were advanced, and a canonnade was opened on the rear-guard, who retired. Four days after, not caring to incur the loss and risk of an assault upon the Americans in their strongholds, on the fifth of November, he abandoned

"Chatterton's Hill," marched to Dobb's Ferry, and ere sunset of the sixth encamped on the elevated bank above, which overlooks the fluted palisades of the Hudson.*

After the retreat of Washington to North Castle, and the advance of Knyphausen to King's Bridge, it is stated that Hamilton was selected to cover a post in the vicinity of Fort Washington. This is believed to be an error, he was not detached.

Washington had formed an opinion which was announced to Congress, "of the absolute necessity† of two armies being organized, one to act in the States lying on the east, the other in those south of the Hudson, both to be raised on a general plan, and not to be confined to any place by the terms of enlistment." This probably was a concession to the obstinate jealousies of the recent colonists. Under this opinion, Howe being in motion towards New York, he left the eastern troops with Lee at North Castle, and retired to Peekskill. There, having posted a corps under the trusty Heath for the defence of the Highlands, on the twelfth of November, with his small force he crossed the Hudson at King's Ferry, this movement being sanctioned by Congress.

The body with him was composed of troops from States west of that river.

Believing that the enemy would move into the Jerseys, his plan now was, in order to check incursions, to quarter his men at a post opposite Fort Washington, and also at Newark, Elizabethtown, Amboy and New Brunswick, expecting the reinforcements promised by Congress.

At this moment he felt a heavy blow in the fall of Fort Washington with the loss of two thousand men, artillery and arms. His letters depict his discouragement

* Appendix D.

† Col. Harrison to Congress, Oct. 25.—*Washington's Writings*, iv. 524.

and mortification. A British detachment crossing into Jersey, he retired first beyond the Hackensack, and thence to Newark. Here was held a council of war. By a force so unequal and insufficient, retreat was inevitable. The direction was differently viewed. By some of the members it was proposed to move to Morristown, there to form a junction with the troops who were expected to wind their way from New York along the mountains of Sussex. But Washington and Greene united in the more hazardous and intrepid determination, if possible, to make a stand at Brunswick; but, at all events, to dispute the passage of the Delaware.

After a short repose, with a body not exceeding three thousand men, half-clothed, many badly armed, without cavalry, debilitated by fatigue, Washington again retreated, closely pursued by eight thousand troops under the command of Lord Cornwallis.

This retreat was undisturbed until New Brunswick was approached. There, as the rear of the Americans crossed the Raritan, the van of the British came in sight. A "spirited cannonade," in which Hamilton took part, checked the advance of the enemy. On the morning of the second of December Howe entered New Brunswick, the Americans, only half their number, having reached Princeton.

"Well do I recollect the day," said a friend, "when Hamilton's company marched into Princeton. It was a model of discipline; at their head was a boy, and I wondered at his youth; but what was my surprise when struck with his slight figure, he was pointed out to me as that Hamilton of whom we had already heard so much." "I noticed," a veteran officer relates, "a youth, a mere stripling, small, slender, almost delicate in frame, marching beside a piece of artillery, with a cocked hat pulled

down over his eyes, apparently lost in thought, with his hand resting on a cannon, and every now and then patting it, as if it were a favorite horse or a pet plaything." *

He continued at the head of his company, which, from its exposure and losses in the brilliant enterprises of Trenton and Princeton was reduced to twenty-five men, until the first of March, seventy-seven. On that day, having, at the instance of Washington, accepted a place in his staff, after declining the overtures of other general officers,† he was announced, in orders, aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

The American head-quarters were now at Morristown, whither Washington had retired early in January, as a place of temporary safety, with fragments of regiments. "Here was seen," as Hamilton stated with regard to the enemy, "the spectacle of a powerful army straitened within narrow limits by the phantom of a military force, and never permitted to transgress those limits with impunity; in which skill supplied the place of means, and disposition was the substitute for an army."

The advantages of this post, selected at the instance of St. Clair, decided his remaining there until the opening of the next campaign. Protected by heights difficult of access, and by extensive heavy forests from the approach of any large force, it was within striking distance of Amboy, New Brunswick and Newark, the present positions of the enemy, thus held in check, while a retreat was secured by various defiles in its rear, leading to a fertile, well-peopled country.

* Irving's Washington, iii. 88. † Elias Boudinot to Lord Stirling.

CHAPTER VI.

Deficient as the American army was in numbers, and thus reduced to inactivity, the severe campaign through which it had passed, had the happy effect of disclosing to the commander-in-chief the character of his officers, and of drawing around him in a common devotion to its cause, the most gallant patriots of this infant nation.

Environed by difficulties, they had learned, and their example had taught the American people the all-important lesson, that their enemy was not invincible; while their common dangers inspired a mutual confidence, which, towards the person of their chief, rose to enthusiasm.

Indeed, in his long life of true glory, this was the moment when Washington's popularity was greatest. The reverses at the beginning of the campaign had scarcely left a hope for America of successful resistance. But when, in the language of Hamilton, "after escaping the grasp of a disciplined and victorious enemy, this little band of patriots were seen skilfully avoiding an engagement until they could contend with advantage; and then, by the masterly enterprises of Trenton and Princeton, cutting them up in detachments, rallying the scattered energies of the country, infusing terror in the breasts of their invaders, and changing the whole tide and current

of the war,"* a new confidence pervaded the nation, and every bosom swelled with gratitude to Washington and to his illustrious companions.

Time with its unerring contrasts more and more opens to the view their difficulties and their merits. Of the former a narrative in some detail must now be given.

The appointment of Charles Lee, a native of England, who had served in America in the war of fifty-six, was at the instance of Washington.

Of a romantic temper, this soldier of fortune sought distinction in the most remote and opposite regions of Europe, serving with equal zest in Portugal against the Spaniards and in Poland against the Turks. Confident of his superiority, he endured with bitter discontent the preference, he alleged, on his native soil interest enjoyed over unassisted merit. This sense of disappointment rankled in his breast. Yielding to this feeling and to the impulses of a wayward nature, he became an impetuous republican. Thus swayed, the New World suddenly opened an unlimited sphere to his ambition. It was the more attractive as it presented to him the prospect of contending in arms with those whom patronage had preferred to him; and of avenging himself upon the privileged orders which he imagined had been the only obstacles to his advancement. Opinions so congenial with those beginning to prevail in America strongly recommended him, and from an over value of his experience he was placed on the general staff, next in rank to Artemas Ward, upon whose resignation he became second in command.

Among the soldiery of New England, the preferment

* When Colonel Rahl wrote to General Grant for more troops to enable him to hold his posts on the Delaware, he laughed at his application, and sent him word that "he could keep the whole Jersies with a corporal and four men."

of Washington to the chief command was at first regarded with jealousy.* The very qualities which fitted him for that command were not kindred to a people extremely jealous of their individual independence, the less so, because exerted to reduce that independence to a due subordination. The conflict to either party was sore. Ward was believed to have resigned, unwilling to admit Washington his superior, and discontented feelings clothed Lee with an importance he little deserved. "You observe," wrote John Adams of Lee, "the oddity of a great man. He is a queer creature, but you must love his dogs if you love him,† and forgive a thousand whims for the sake of the soldier and the scholar." ‡

The great man resolved to become greater, and only waited some reverse of Washington to mount to supreme command. The casualties of an unprovided war often demanded the intervention of Congress. Supposed to wear fortune in his crest, Lee was ordered to Canada to retrieve the mishaps there. "We want you at New York," writes John Adams, "we want you at Cambridge, we want you in Virginia, but Canada seems of more importance than any of those places, and therefore you are sent there." Ten days after he was sent to Charleston. "After a warm contest," Hancock writes, "occasioned by the high estimation the members of Congress have of your worth and abilities, every one wishing to have you where he had most at stake, Congress have this day come to a

* J. Adams writes, x. 36: "The appointment of Washington to the command in 1775 of an army in Cambridge, consisting altogether of New England men, over the head of officers of their own flesh and choice, a most hazardous step, was another instance of *apparent unanimity*, and real regret in nearly one half."

† On his journey to Boston with Washington, his suite was *eleven poodle dogs*.

‡ American Archives, July 24, 1775.

resolution that you shall take the command of the southern department." * From Charleston he was ordered to the camp at Haerlem, having received the thanks of Congress, and a loan for his success at the South.

Amid all this intoxicating favor, such were his eccentricities, that he soon alarmed those who guided the early councils of this country by the most arbitrary acts and startling indiscretions. But, nevertheless, he enjoyed the confidence of the people, who mistook his extravagances for genius, and imagined they saw, in the roughness of his manners and in the irregularities of his mind, evidences of natural resources which only waited an opportunity for their display. Led away by the impetuosity of his temper, he often transcended the strict bounds of duty. Yet for every violation his ready wit furnished a plausible excuse, while his reputed knowledge gave him an influence with the uninformed, to whom he was the more recommended by the pointed sarcasms always at his command, which would have been withheld from an open avowal of disapprobation. Had this been all, it would have been enough to offend a just sense of the great importance of confidence in the person selected to lead the armies of America at such a crisis. But Lee's was not merely a hostility of words. It rose to acts which, jeoparding the fate of the country, merited the severest penalty of martial law.

On the tenth of November,† from his head-quarters at White Plains, two days before he crossed the Hudson, Washington stated in instructions to Lee, "if the enemy should remove the whole, or the greatest part of their force to the west side of the Hudson River, I have no doubt of your following with all possible despatch, leaving the militia and invalids to cover the frontiers of Connec-

* Lee's Memoirs, 203. † 1776.

ticut in case of need." On the twentieth he informed him through an aide-de-camp that the enemy had landed west of the Hudson in great numbers, as was reported, and that "it would be advisable in him to remove the troops under his command" across the North River, "and there wait further orders." An order was at the same time sent to Heath to hold himself in readiness to march at a moment's warning, and to forward this order to Lord Stirling and General Stephen, who were to make the same preparation. On the same day, at evening, Reed, late a member of Washington's staff, now adjutant-general, sent Lee an express; "we are flying before the British, I pray," and the pencil broke, then added verbally, "you push and join us." On receiving similar advice from Heath at Peekskill, Lee wrote him, "Col. Reed has written me a short billet that I do not well understand," inquiring the condition of his barracks, the number of his men, and the state of his defences in case he were attacked. No intimation was given of his own purposes.

The next day,* Washington wrote to him himself, "With respect to your situation, I am very much at a loss what now to determine. There is such a change of circumstances since the date of your letter, as seems to call for a change of measures. * * Upon the whole I am of opinion, and the gentlemen about me concur in it, that the public interest requires your coming over to this side of the Hudson, with the continental troops, leaving Fellows and Wadsworth's brigades to take care of the stores during their short stay, at the expiration of which, I suppose, they will set out for home. My reasons for this measure, which I think must have weight with you, are, that the enemy is evidently changing the seat of war to this side of the North River; and that the inhabitants of

* Nov. 21.

this country will expect the continental army to give them what support they can; and, failing in that, they will cease to depend upon or support a force from which no protection is derived. It is therefore of the utmost importance, that at least an appearance of force should be made, to keep this province in connection with the others." He at the same time pressed Livingston, governor of New Jersey, to call out his militia, and dispatched General Mifflin to Congress, to urge "the necessity of early succors." Lee immediately* wrote a second letter to Heath. "I have just received a recommendation, not a positive order, from the general, to move the corps under my command to the other side of the river. This recommendation was, I imagine, on the presumption that I had already moved nearer the Peekskill. There is no possibility of crossing over Dobb's Ferry, or at any place lower than King's Ferry, which would be such an immense round that we could never answer any purpose. I must, therefore, desire and request that you will order two thousand of your corps to cross the river, apprise the general, and wait his further orders. As soon as we have finished a necessary job, I will replace this number from hence, which job, will, I believe, be finished to-morrow." At the same moment, he replied in the same terms to Reed, stating his order to Heath, "a mode," he said, "which I flatter myself will answer better what I conceive to be the spirit of the orders than should I move the corps from hence. Withdrawing our troops from hence would be attended with very serious consequences, which, at present, would be tedious to enumerate."

On the same day Reed wrote to Lee from Hackensack, "Dear General, the letter you will receive with this contains my sentiments with respect to your present situation.

* Nov. 21.

But besides this, I have some additional reasons for most earnestly wishing to have you where the principal scene of action is laid. I do not mean to flatter nor praise you at the expense of any other, but I confess, I do think that it is entirely owing to you, that this army, and the liberties of America, so far as they are dependent on it, are not totally cut off. You have decision, a quality often wanting in minds otherwise valuable: and I ascribe to this our escape from York Island, from King's Bridge, and the Plains; and I have no doubt, had you been here, the garrison of Mount Washington would now have composed a part of this army; and from all these circumstances, I confess, I ardently wish to see you removed from a place where I think there will be little call for your judgment and experience, to the place where they are likely to be so necessary. Nor am I singular in my opinion; every gentleman of the family, the officers and soldiers generally, have a confidence in you: the enemy constantly inquire where you are, and seem to be less confident when you are present.

"Colonel Cadwallader, through a special indulgence on account of some civilities shown by his family to General Prescott, has been liberated from New York without any parole. He informs that the enemy have a southern expedition in view; that they hold us very cheap in consequence of the late affair at Mount Washington, where both the plan of defence and execution were contemptible. If a real defence of the lines was intended, the number was too few; if the fort only, the garrison was too numerous by half. General Washington's own judgment, seconded by representations from us, would, I believe, have saved the men and their arms; but, unluckily, General Greene's judgment was contrary. This kept the general's mind in a state of supense till the stroke was

struck. Oh, general! an indecisive mind is one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall an army: how often have I lamented it this campaign.

"All circumstances considered, we are in a very awful, alarming state, one that requires the utmost wisdom and firmness of mind. As soon as the season will admit, I think yourself and some others should go to Congress, and form the plan of the new army, point out their defects to them, and, if possible, prevail on them to bend their whole attention to this great object, even to the exclusion of every other. If they will not or cannot do this, I fear all our exertions will be vain in this part of the world. Foreign assistance is soliciting, but we cannot expect they will fight the whole battle.

"I intended to have said more, but the express is waiting, and I must conclude with my clear and explicit opinion, that your presence is of the last importance. I am, with much affection and regard." * Six days after, the army being in rapid retreat, Reed resigned his office of adjutant-general. Sensible of the injurious effect upon the army of such an act by the head of his staff, and probably moved by a regard to Reed's reputation, Washington induced him to withdraw his resignation.

Lee was resolved in his purpose to withhold the required reinforcements, though he had under his command more than five thousand five hundred effective men.† As to their condition he had recently written to Franklin: ‡ "The spirit of our present troops is, upon the whole, good, and if America is lost, it is not, in my opinion, owing to want of courage in your soldiers, but, pardon me, to want of prudence in your high mightinesses."

* The Life and Memoirs of the late Major General Lee, p. 227, duodecimo.

† Returns Nov. 24, 1776, present fit for duty, 5,589, exclusive of militia, 363.

‡ White Plains, Nov. 6, 1776.

That his intention was to hold a separate command; to disseminate distrust of Washington; to permit his army to be sacrificed; to win more upon the confidence of the New England States; and in certain contingencies to hold his power from a convention of those States throwing off the authority of Congress, looking to the then not improbable event of a severance of the imperfect union, may be inferred from his conduct and his correspondence. At the same date with the letter from Reed, he writes to Bowdoin, president of Massachusetts; to Trumbull, governor of Connecticut; and through his aid, to Weare, president of New Hampshire.

To Bowdoin he observed, "Before the unfortunate affair of Fort Washington, it was my opinion, that the two armies, that on the east and that on the west side of North River, must rest each on its own bottom; that the idea of detaching and reinforcing from one side to the other, on every motion of the enemy, was chimerical: but to harbor such a thought in our present circumstances, is absolute insanity. In this invasion, should the enemy alter the present direction of their operations, and attempt to open the passage of the Highlands, or enter New England, I should never entertain the thought of being succored by the *western* army. I know it is impossible. We must, therefore, depend upon ourselves. To Connecticut and Massachusetts I shall look for assistance. The time of the men who compose the little corps under my command is near expiring. I must repeat, therefore, that I hope not only the legislative body, but the whole gentlemen of the New England provinces, will exert themselves to forward the completion of the continental regiments. * * I hope the cursed job of *Fort Washington* will occasion no dejection; the place itself was of no value. For my own part, I am persuaded, that if we

only act with common sense, spirit, and decision, the day must be our own." His letters to Trumbull are not obtained, but the answer* shows the impression he had made. "Your favors of the twenty-first and twenty-second were duly received, and I now answer, that for the reasons and events you mention, I do fully concur in the sentiment, that we must, very much, if not altogether, depend upon ourselves on this side the river for preventing the enemy from penetrating this way. In this view of the matter, the assembly have ordered four battalions for march, as soon as possible, properly equipped, to continue till the fifteenth of March next; in the mean time our quota of regulars will be raising and forwarding." That eloquent, steadfast patriot was not content with exerting his well-deserved influence over Connecticut; he wrote to Massachusetts, "What means that languor, inertion and dispiritedness, that seems to overwhelm the *New England* States? Our army to the westward barefoot, fleeing before the enemy. * * A fleet of the enemy of upwards of one hundred sail pushing up Narraganset Bay, and no doubt a large land force on board, to get footing in that quarter. We have the strongest intimations of General Lee and others, besides the same demonstrations in our own breasts, that unless the New England colonies renew their exertions by redoubled vigor, all is lost." He then urges, as soon as the army are retired to winter quarters, a convention of the New England States, "to consult on the great affairs of our safety, and of counteracting the enemy in their future operations. We have a hint of this in a late letter from General Lee." On the same day Lee advised Weare of the probability of the enemy paying a visit "very soon" to New Hampshire, founded on the tale of a deserter; and that they had

* Nov. 30.

landed five thousand men in the Jerseys. The next day* he again writes to Bowdoin, taking up the theme of Reed. "Indecision bids fair for tumbling down the goodly fabric of American freedom, and with it, the rights of mankind. 'Twas indecision of Congress prevented our having a noble army and on an excellent footing. 'Twas indecision in our military councils which cost us the garrison of Fort Washington, the consequence of which must be fatal, unless remedied in time by a contrary spirit. Enclosed I send you an extract of a letter from the general, on which you will make your comments, and I have no doubt you will concur with me on the necessity of raising immediately an army to save us from perdition." He calls for reinforcements and clothing, disclosing his own purpose, "as *I* am determined, by the help of God, to arrest 'em, even in the dead of winter." Two days after,† he thus acknowledges the extraordinary letter of Reed: "I received your most obliging, flattering letter, lament with you that fatal indecision of mind which in war is a much greater disqualification than stupidity, or mere want of personal courage; accident may put a decisive blunder in the right, but eternal defeat and miscarriage must attend the man of the best parts, if cursed with indecision. The general recommends, in so pressing a manner as almost to amount to an order, to bring over the continental troops under my command, which recommendation or order throws me into the greatest dilemma from several considerations. Part of the troops are so ill furnished that they must inevitably perish in this wretched weather. Part of them are to be dismissed on Saturday, and this part is the best accoutred for service. What shelter we are to find on the other side of the river is a serious consideration; but these considerations should not sway me."

* Nov. 22. † Nov. 24.

He assigns as his chief reason, the prospect of capturing a party of the enemy, which "being over, I shall then fly to you; for, to confess a truth, I really think our chief will do better with me than without me." He at the same time writes to Washington, "I have received your orders, and shall endeavor to put them in execution; but question much whether I shall be able to carry with me any considerable number, not so much from a want of zeal in the men, as from their wretched condition with respect to shoes, stockings and blankets, which the present bad weather renders more intolerable." He then informs him, that he had ordered Heath to cross the river with two thousand men, and wait his orders; "but that great man (as I might have expected) intrenched himself within the letter of his instructions; that *he* should march that day with Glover's brigade, but for his projected expedition against a party of the enemy, which, if successful, would have a great effect and amply compensate for *two days*' delay." Lee then had advanced to North Castle.

A *third* letter * from Washington was now received by him. "You seem," he said, "to have mistaken my views entirely, in ordering troops from General Heath to cross Hudson's river to this side. The importance of the posts and passes through the Highlands is so infinitely great, that I never thought there should be the least possible risk of losing them. Colonel Reed's second letter will have sufficiently explained my intention upon this subject, and pointed out to you that it was your division I want to have over." He urged him to avoid being intercepted, by choosing some back way for his approach, and to advise him by frequent expresses. The same day he wrote him a *fourth* letter, indicating, but not prescribing,

* Nov. 24.

his route, except "by all means to keep between the enemy and the mountains;" and to advise him by frequent expresses. Nor was Washington's reluctance to withdraw troops from the Highlands without sufficient, exclusive of military, reasons; for George Clinton, always looking intently on New York, wrote to its Committee of Safety, "Should the orders be to move, all's over with the river this season, and, I fear, for ever." "No particular accounts yet from head-quarters, but I am apt to believe, retreating is yet fashionable." This committee communicated these objections to Washington and to Heath. Lee replied the next day,* stating that the motive of his order to Heath was to gain time, giving excuses for his own delay, that a part of his troops had advanced, and that he would follow the next day, obeying the orders as to his march "as exactly as possible." While Lee was thus loitering on his way, Schuyler, in despite of the decision of a council of war to proceed northward, instructed Gates to detain his troops at Albany. The ensuing day,† at the moment of learning the loss of Fort Washington, he ordered all the troops that "had passed or were passing," to join the commander-in-chief, "as he may stand in need of them, with all possible despatch;" thus anticipating the orders of Washington, who, in the mean time, had taken measures to suppress the Tories in the lower part of Jersey, and was urging Congress to forward volunteers from Pennsylvania.

Lee was still looking eastward. He again, at this time,‡ writes to Bowdoin, indicating his paramount regard for New England. "Would it not be prudent to order all the continental stores to a more central place than Boston, should the enemy take it in their head to send a fleet before Boston?"

* Nov. 25. † Nov. 25. ‡ Nov. 25.

Washington could brook no further delay. Two days after, he wrote him a *fifth* letter. "My former letters were so full and explicit as to the necessity of your marching as early as possible, that it is unnecessary to add more on that head. I confess, I expected you would have been sooner in motion. The force here (Newark), when joined by yours, will not be adequate to any great opposition. At present it is weak, and it has been owing more to the badness of the weather, that the enemy's progress has been checked, than to any resistance we could make. They are now pushing this way; part of them have passed the Passaic." He thought Philadelphia might be their object, and wished success to his enterprise.

Nothing could be more dreary than Washington's situation. Including the raw militia suddenly gathered, his numbers, as stated, were but four thousand. So destitute their condition, a British officer writes, "I believe no nation ever saw such a set of tatterdemalions. There are but few coats among them but what are out at elbows, and in a whole regiment there is scarce a pair of breeches. Judge, then, how they must be pinched by a winter's campaign."

The term of service of some of the best troops had expired. Efforts to intercept the numerous deserters were fruitless. Again he must retreat, and there seemed no alternative but to cross the Delaware with the enemy in hot pursuit. Even this might not be practicable.

Lee answered Washington from Peekskill,* "You complain of my not being in motion sooner. I do assure you that I have done all in my power, and shall explain my difficulties when we both have leisure. * * * I am in hopes I shall be able to render you more service than if I had moved sooner. I *think*, I shall enter the

* Nov. 30.

province of Jersey with four thousand firm and willing troops, who will make a very important diversion. Had I stirred sooner, I should have only led an inferior number of unwilling. The day after to-morrow we shall pass the river, when I should be glad to receive your instructions; but I could wish you would bind me as little as possible; not from any opinion, I do assure you, of my own parts, but from a persuasion that detached generals cannot have too great latitude, unless they are very incompetent indeed." On the same day, seeing no escape from taking part in the impending hazards, Lee wrote to Bowdoin,* "The affairs of America are in a more alarming situation every day. The enemy have passed the Passaic; unless, therefore, the New England provinces exert themselves, not only vigorously but essentially, we are lost. General Washington has ordered me with the continental troops over the river. This measure may be necessary for *Philadelphia*, but the hardships that the men must encounter this season of the year, will, I apprehend, prevent very considerably the recruiting the new army; and unless an army is formed, and immediately, you must submit to the yoke prepared." He proposed drafts of men. The following day † Washington wrote him a *sixth* letter, dated Brunswick. "The enemy are advancing, and have got as far as Woodbridge and Amboy, and from information not to be doubted, they mean to push for Philadelphia. The force I have with me is infinitely inferior in numbers, and such as cannot give or promise the least sucessful opposition. It is greatly reduced by the departure of the Maryland flying camp, and by sundry other causes. I must entreat you to hasten your march as much as possible, or your arrival may be too late to answer any valuable purpose. I cannot particu-

* Nov. 30. † Dec. 1.

larize your route, or the place at which you will join me. In these respects you must be governed by circumstances, and the intelligence you receive."* The day after, Lee crossed the Hudson and moved on slowly. The third of December, Washington, having reached Trenton, wrote him a *seventh* letter. "You will readily agree, that I have sufficient cause for my anxiety and for wishing your arrival as early as possible. * * The sooner you can join me with your division, the sooner the service will be benefited. As to bringing any of the troops under General Heath, I cannot consent to it. The posts they are at, and the passes through the Highlands, being of the utmost importance, they must be guarded by good men." He then writes Congress, "I have not heard a word from General Lee since the twenty-sixth of last month; which surprises me not a little, as I have despatched daily expresses to him, desiring to know when I may look for him. * * I have this minute despatched Colonel Stewart (General Gates' aid-de-camp), to meet General Lee and bring me an account." The day previous, Congress had instructed a committee to send an express to Lee to learn the situation of his army. On the fourth of December, Lee writes Washington from Haverstraw, on the western bank of the Hudson, "I have received your pressing letter, since which, intelligence was sent to me, that you had quitted Brunswick, so that it is impossible to know where I can join you. But, although *I should not be able to join you at all*, the service which I can render you, will, I hope, be full as efficacious. The northern army has already advanced nearer to Morristown than I am. I shall put

* Wayne writes at this time from Ticonderoga to Gates: "My heart bleeds for poor Washington. Had he but Southern troops, he would not be necessitated so often to fly before an enemy, who, I fear, has lately had but too much reason to hold us cheap."—*Dec.* 1.

myself at their head to-morrow. We shall, upon the whole, compose an army of five thousand good troops in spirits. I should imagine, dear General, that it may be of service to communicate this to the troops immediately under your command. It may encourage them and startle the enemy. In fact, their confidence must be risen to a prodigious height, if they pursue you, with so formidable a body hanging on their flank and rear. * * * It is paltry to think of our personal affairs when the whole is at stake; but I entreat you to order some of your suite to take out of the way of danger my favorite mare, which is at that Wilson's three miles beyond Princeton."

Two days after, Greene wrote to Washington from Princeton; "Major Clarke reports General Lee is at the heels of the enemy. I should think he had better keep upon the flanks than the rear of the enemy, unless it were possible to concert an attack at the same instant of time in front and rear. I think General Lee must be confined within the lines of some general plan, or else his operations will be independent of yours." On the same day,* Lee writes to Cooke, governor of Rhode Island, from Pompton. After speaking of the appointments of officers, he observes, "Theory joined to practice, or a heaven-born genius, can alone constitute a general. As to the latter, God Almighty indulges the modern world very rarely with the spectacle; and I do not know, from what I have seen, that he has been more profuse of this ethereal spirit to the Americans than to other nations." He intimates that Rhode Island will probably be attacked.

To excuse himself with Congress, he next wrote† to Richard Henry Lee and Benjamin Rush, his friends in that body, having at last reached Morristown. "My corps that passed the *North* river will amount (for we are

* Dec. 7. † Dec. 8.

considerably diminished) to seven and twenty hundred; in fact our army may be estimated at four thousand. If I was not taught to think that the army with General Washington had been considerably reinforced, I should immediately join him; but as I am assured he is very strong, I should imagine we can make a better impression by beating up and harassing their detached parties in the rear, for which purpose a good post at Chatham seems the best calculated. It is at a happy distance from Newark, Elizabethtown, Woodbridge and Boundbrook. We shall, I expect, annoy, distract, and consequently weaken them in a desultory war; but we are so ill-shod and destitute of light horse, that the troops are in a bad condition for that species of service. I must do 'em justice to say that they have noble spirits; and will, I have no doubt, render great service to their country." On the same day he wrote to Washington a letter nearly in the same words. Washington, writing to Congress of this date, remarks, "I have no certain intelligence of General Lee, although I have sent frequent expresses to him, and lately Colonel Humpton, to bring me some accurate accounts of his situation. I last night despatched another gentleman to him, Major Hoops, desiring he would hasten his march to the Delaware, in which I would provide boats near a place called Alexandria, for the transportation of his troops. I cannot account for the slowness of his march." His great solicitude was the defence of Philadelphia. Lee wrote to Washington again on the same day * from Chatham. "Major Hoops has just delivered to me your excellency's letter. I am extremely shocked to hear that your force is so inadequate to the necessity of your situation, as I had been taught to think you had been considerably reinforced. Your last letters proposing a plan of

* Dec. 8.

surprises and forced marches, convinced me that there was no danger of your being obliged to pass the Delaware, in consequence of which proposals, I have put myself in a position the most convenient to co-operate with you, by *attacking their rear.* I cannot persuade myself that Philadelphia is their object at present, as it is almost certain their whole troops lately embarked have directed their course to the eastern provinces. * * * It will be difficult, I am afraid, to join you, but cannot I do you more service by attacking their rear? I shall look about me to-morrow, and inform you further." The following day * Lee addressed General Heath, who had written to Washington in terms prompted unquestionably by what he had seen of the policy of Lee;—"any orders from your excellency to move the troops or any part of them, shall be instantly obeyed." To this effect "I sent an express to you last night from General Washington, ordering your division to cross the river, which, I confess, for my own part, I am heartily sorry for, as I think we shall be strong enough without you, and New England, with your district, will be too bare of troops. I am in hopes here to reconquer (if I may so express myself) the Jerseys. It was really in the hands of the enemy before my arrival."

The day after,† Washington wrote to Lee from Trenton Falls an *eighth* letter. "I last night received your favor by Colonel Humpton, and were it not for the weak and feeble state of the force I have, I should highly approve of your hanging on the rear of the enemy, and establishing the post you mention; but when my situation is directly the opposite of what you suppose it to be, and when General Howe is pressing forward with the whole of his army (except the troops that were lately embarked, and a few besides left at New York), to possess himself

* Dec. 9. † Dec. 10.

of Philadelphia, I cannot but request and entreat you, and this, too, by the advice of all the general officers with me, to march and join me with your whole force with all possible expedition. The utmost exertions that can be made, will not be more than sufficient to save Philadelphia. Without the aid of your force I think there is but little, if any, prospect of doing it. * * * Do come on; your arrival may be fortunate, and if it can be effected without delay, it may be the means of preserving a city, whose loss must prove of the most fatal consequence to the cause of America. Pray exert your influence, and bring with you all the Jersey militia you possibly can. Let them not suppose their State is lost because the enemy are pushing through it." Congress at this moment issued an address to revive the desponding spirits of the people, in which they said, "General Lee is advancing with a strong reinforcement, and his troops in high spirits." The day after * he wrote him a *ninth* letter. "Philadelphia, beyond all question, is the object of the enemy's movements; nothing less than our utmost exertions will be sufficient to prevent General Howe from possessing it. The force I have is weak and entirely incompetent to that end. I must, therefore, entreat you to push on with every possible succor you can bring. Your aid may give a favorable complexion to our affairs. You know the importance of Philadelphia, and the fatal consequences that must attend the loss of it." The same day a note was addressed to Washington from Morristown in the handwriting of Lee. "We have three thousand men here at present, but they are so ill-shod, that we have been obliged to halt these two days for want of shoes. Seven regiments of Gates' corps are on their march, but where they actually are, is not certain. General Lee has sent two officers this day, one

* Dec. 11.

to inform him where the Delaware can be crossed above Trenton, the other to examine the road towards Burlington. As General Lee thinks he can, without great risk, cross the great Brunswick post road, and by a forced night's march make his way to the ferry below Burlington, where boats should be sent up from Philadelphia to receive him; but this scheme he only proposes if the head of the enemy's column actually pass the river. The militia in this part of the province seem sanguine. If they could be sure of an *army remaining amongst them*, I believe they would raise a very considerable number."

Congress now* adjourned in haste to Baltimore. Washington answered with suppressed indignation in a *tenth* letter.† "I am much surprised that you should be in any doubt respecting the route you should take, after the information you have received upon that head as well by letter as from Major Hoops, who was despatched for that purpose. A large number of boats was procured and is still retained at Tinicum, under a strong guard, to facilitate your passage across the Delaware. I have so frequently mentioned our situation and the necessity of your aid, that it is painful for me to add a word upon the subject. Let me once more request and entreat you to march immediately for Pittstown, which lies on the route that has been pointed out, and is about eleven miles from Tinicum ferry. That is more on the flank of the enemy than where you now are. * * * The Congress have directed Philadelphia to be defended to the last extremity. The fatal consequences that must attend its loss are but too obvious to every one. Your arrival may be the means of saving it." On the same day‡ he writes Governor Trumbull, moved by an expedition of the enemy to Newport: "General Lee's division is so necessary to sup-

* Dec. 12. † Dec. 14. ‡ Dec. 14.

port this part of the army, that without its assistance we must inevitably be overpowered and Philadelphia lost." His desire of aid was the more earnest, as from the dispersed state of the enemy, the advance extended along the Delaware, the reserve at Princeton and Brunswick, an opportunity was offered of turning upon them. "A lucky blow in this quarter," he says in the same letter, "would be fatal to them, and would most certainly raise the spirits of the people, which are quite sunk by our late misfortunes."

On the day of his late note to Washington, Lee moved from Morristown and reached a point eight miles from it, where he left his troops under command of Sullivan, taking up his own quarters at a tavern in Baskenridge, three miles distant from his force, whence he addressed this letter to General Gates pregnant with the theme suggested by Reed: "The injurious manœuvre of Fort Washington has completely unhinged the goodly fabric we had been building. There never was so damned a stroke; entre nous, a certain great man is most damnably deficient. He has thrown me into a situation where I have my choice of difficulties. If I stay in this province, I risk myself and army, and if I do not stay, the province is lost for ever. I have neither guards, cavalry, medicines, money, shoes or stockings. I must act with the greatest circumspection. Forces are in my front, rear, and on my flanks. The mass of the people is strangely contaminated. In short, unless something which I do not expect turns up, we are lost. Our councils have been weak to the last degree. As to what relates to yourself, if you think you can be in time to aid the general, I would have you by all means go.* You will at least save your army. It is

* So intent was he on his own designs, that of the *seven* regiments under Gates, ordered by Schuyler to the relief of Washington, he had ordered *three* to join his force at Morristown.

said that the whigs are determined to set fire to Philadelphia.

"If they strike this decisive stroke, the day will be our own; but unless it is done, all chance of liberty, in any part of the globe, is for ever vanished. Adieu, my dear friend; God bless you."

This was probably in reply to a letter from Gates addressed to Washington, delivered to him by Wilkinson, the aid of Gates, who, on his route to the commander-in-chief, had sought and found the second in command. Lee had just finished his epistle when a party of British dragoons advanced upon the tavern in which he was, at full charge. Lee called for the guard. "Where is the guard? damn the guard, why don't they fire? Do, sir," to Wilkinson, "see what has become of the guard." The guards, reposing in the sun, were scattered by the dragoons. The women proposed to put Lee to bed, but he refused. Wilkinson took refuge in a hiding-place, Lee was captured, and without hat or coat, in slippers, and covered with a blanket, mounted on Wilkinson's horse, he terminated this campaign, a prisoner at Brunswick. Thus was he relieved from "a choice of difficulties."

"It was an aggravation of the misfortune," wrote an English soldier, "to lose him under such circumstances, which favored an opinion, that despairing of the American cause he suffered himself to be taken prisoner." *

On receiving tidings of his capture, his friends deplored his loss as irreparable. John Trumbull, adjutant-general to Gates, wrote from Bethlehem to Governor Trumbull: † "Lee's army cross at Easton this day. Our affairs have never been in so critical a situation. New York and Jersey totally lost except the back woods;

* Journal of occurrences, by R. Lamb, p. 130. "Qui se fait brebis, le loup le mange."

† Dec. 16.

the army inferior, and at the same time when most wanted deprived of the best, almost the only, officer who could rescue them from a situation so nigh desperate."

Benjamin Rush of the medical staff thus condoles with Richard Henry Lee.* "Since the captivity of General Lee a distrust has crept in among the troops of the abilities of some of our general officers high in command. They expect nothing now from heaven-taught and book-taught generals."

Hancock, president of Congress, wrote to Robert Morris from Baltimore,† "I am afraid his loss will be severely felt, as he was in great measure the idol of the officers, and possessed still more, the confidence of the soldiery."

The day after Lee's capture,‡ and before the tidings had reached him, Washington wrote to Gates: "I have heard that you are coming on with seven regiments. This may have a happy effect, and let me entreat you not to delay a moment in hastening to Pittstown. You will advise me of your approaches. I expect General Lee will be there this evening or to-morrow, who will be followed by General Heath and his division. If we can draw our forces together, I trust, under the smiles of Providence, we may yet effect an important stroke, or at least prevent General Howe from executing his plans." At the same time he writes to Heath, "I am extremely pleased by the ready attention you have paid to my orders, and have only to request that you will proceed with your troops, with all possible despatch, to Pittstown, pursuing General Lee's route, and where I expect you will join him. Lose not a moment. The situation of our affairs demands industry and despatch on all hands. If we can collect our force, and speedily, I should hope we may effect something

* Dec. 21. † Dec. 23. ‡ Dec. 14.

of importance, or at least give such a turn to our affairs as to make them assume a more pleasing aspect than they now have."

He had ordered him to leave a body of twelve or fifteen hundred men to secure the passes in the Highlands.

Sullivan, now in command of Lee's division, united in the urgent call. Abandoning the intended route of Lee, he pressed on to Easton, and on the seventeenth of December, the troops, delighted with their new commander, crossed the Delaware. Gates also was coming up with nine hundred men. A junction of these forces being made on the twentieth, Washington proposed to Gates to take command at Bristol, and thence to co-operate with him. Unwilling to hold other than an independent command, pleading ill health, Gates asked permission to proceed to Philadelphia. The commander-in-chief requested him to stop at Bristol a day or two, in order to concert with Cadwallader and Reed a plan of operations. He preferred not to obey this request. The day before the battle of Trenton he proceeded to the seat of Congress, indulging, on his way, gloomy vaticinations as to Washington's army; and arriving in time to learn its resolves,* investing Washington with almost unlimited military power, communicated in terms of well-deserved confidence. "Happy is it for this country, that the general of their forces can safely be intrusted with the most unlimited power, and neither personal security, liberty or property, be in the least degree endangered." † "I shall constantly bear in mind," Washington replied, "that as the sword was the last resort for the preservation of our liberties, so it ought to be the first thing laid aside when those liberties are firmly established."

It was the arrival of the troops recently under Lee

* Dec. 27, 1776.

† Washington's Writings, iv. 552.

that enabled him to rescue Philadelphia, to turn the tide of the war, and terminate the campaign with highest distinction. In this great extremity, unhappily, Lee and Gates were not alone wanting to their duty. They were foreigners by birth, education, habit. If the liberties of America were lost, they could seek elsewhere a home and an easy solace. But there was another individual whose conduct, only recently recorded on the page of history, startles with surprise.

The son of a "laboring farmer" of Massachusetts, a witness of her grievous wrongs, raised from his humble state to high distinguished trust, chosen to Congress expressly to draw the other colonies to aid her noble efforts, claiming pre-eminence in inciting the American people to independence—this favored person was among the first to abandon, and the latest to resume his trust.

When a battle near New York was approaching, a sudden change came over the mind of John Adams. He began to sigh for the modest quiet of private life. "I had rather," he wrote, "build stone wall on Penn's Hill, than to be the first prince in Europe, or the first general or first senator in America." *

He would at this time—four days before the landing of Howe upon Long Island †—have abandoned his seat in Congress; but a sense of shame restrained him, and perhaps the result might be fortunate. It proved to be "unfortunate," and as the consequences became more serious, more menacing, he could no longer resist his yearnings for "Penn's Hill." On the thirteenth of October, at the moment Washington was writing from Haerlem heights that his army was "on the eve of dissolution," when Howe was advancing to strike a decisive blow, he left Congress, followed by the triumphant scoffings of the

* Aug. 18, 1776. † Aug. 22, 1776.

enemy.* In his route he avoided the army, keeping above the Highlands, nor did he return until the first of the following February after the victories of Trenton and of Princeton had turned the scale.† Yet at this crisis John Adams was chairman of the Board of War! One of his first utterances after his return was a censure of Washington addressed to a general officer,‡ "What is the army at Providence about? What is become of the army at Peekskill, or on the White Plains? What numbers have they? Are we to go on for ever in this way, maintaining vast armies in idleness, and losing the fairest opportu-

* Irving's Washington, ii. 447: "The two Adamses are in New England.'

† The knowledge of these facts is derived from the "Life of John Adams by his grandson, Charles Adams." Works, i. 453: "If it had not been for the critical state of things," J. Adams writes, "I should have been at Boston ere now. But a battle being expected at New York, *as it is every day*, and has been for some time, I thought it would not be well to leave my station here. Indeed, if the decision should be *unfortunate* for America, it will be *absolutely necessary for a Congress to be sitting*, and *perhaps* I may be as well calculated to sustain such a stroke as some others. It will be necessary to have some persons here who will *not be seized with an ague fit*."—*J. Adams to James Warren, Aug.* 17, 1776. J. Adams to his wife, ii. 43, Oct. 11: "I yesterday asked and obtained leave of absence." Diary, ii. 243: "Oct. 13. Sunday, set out from Philadelphia towards Boston; rode thirty miles, crossing the Delaware at Trenton." P. 257: "Worn out with constant labors in his department and in Congress, *after* the adoption of the measures to reorganize the army, which were the *most urgent* (see, in contradiction, Journals of Congress for Nov. 19, 22, 25, 26, 27, Dec. 1, 9, 10, 27, 1776), Mr. Adams, availing himself of his leave of absence for the rest of the year, *on the 13th of the same month* (October) mounted his horse and returned home. Congress removed to Baltimore, whither Mr. Adams directed his steps on *the 9th of January*, 1777, winding his way through Connecticut to Fishkill, finding, as he said, not one half the discontent *nor of the terror* among the people that he left in the Massachusetts." P. 258: "The *round-about journey* to Baltimore took three weeks to accomplish. He arrived on the evening of the 1st of February." P. 259: "I have been," he wrote, "so long absent, that I seemed to have lost all my correspondents in the army."

‡ Adams to Gen. Sullivan, Feb. 22, 1777.

nity that ever offered of destroying an enemy completely in our power?"*

In strongest contrast with these delinquent persons stood, next to Washington in real and deserved pre-eminence, General NATHANIEL GREENE. "Descended," as Hamilton stated, "from reputable parents, but not placed by birth in that elevated rank, which, under a monarchy, is the only sure road to those employments that give activity and scope to abilities, he must in all probability have contented himself with the humble lot of a private citizen, or at most, with the contracted sphere of an elective office, in a colonial and dependent government, scarcely conscious of the resources of his own mind, had not the violated rights of his country called him to act a part on a more splendid and more ample theatre.

Happily for America he hesitated not to obey the call. The vigor of his genius, corresponding with the importance of the prize to be contended for, overcame the natural moderation of his temper; and, though not hurried on by enthusiasm, but animated by an enlightened sense of the value of free government, he cheerfully resolved to stake his fortune, his hopes, his life, and his honor upon an enterprise, the danger of which he knew the whole magnitude, in a cause, which was worthy of the toils and of the blood of heroes.

The sword having been appealed to at Lexington, as the arbiter of the controversy between Great Britain and America, Greene shortly after marched, at the head of a regiment, to join the American forces at Cambridge, de-

* "In other words, Congress contemplated the transformation of a delegate from their own body into a WAR MINISTER!" Ibid. p. 250: "With the exception of the brilliant actions of Trenton and Princeton, there was little in the military department, while *he* had *the superintendence of it*, that was calculated to cheer his spirits. *But he never despaired.*"

termined to abide the awful decision. He was not long there before the discerning eye of the American Fabius marked him out as the object of his confidence. His abilities entitled him to a pre-eminent share in the councils of his chief. He gained it, and he preserved it, amidst all the checkered varieties of military vicissitude, and in defiance of all the intrigues of jealous and aspiring rivals.

As long as the measures which conducted us safely through the first most critical stages of the war shall be remembered with approbation, as long as the enterprises of Trenton* and Princeton shall be regarded as the dawnings of that bright day, which afterwards broke forth with such resplendent lustre, as long as the almost magic operations of the remainder of that memorable winter, distinguished not more by these events than by the extraordinary spectacle of a powerful army straitened within narrow limits by the phantom of a military force, and never permitted to transgress those limits with impunity, in which skill supplied the place of means, and disposition was the substitute for an army; as long as these operations shall continue to be the objects of curiosity and wonder, so long ought the name of Greene to be revered by a grateful country."

This was but the opening of his brilliant career, whom, after its termination, Hamilton pronounced "THE FIRST SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION."†

In important service with the main army, John Sullivan was next. This dauntless soldier was of a race dis-

* Greene to Governor Cooke, Dec. 21, 1776: "The fright and disaffection was so great in the Jersies, that in our retreat of one hundred and odd miles, we were never joined by more than a hundred men. * * * We are now on the west side of the Delaware; our force, though small, collected together: but small as it is, I hope to give the enemy a stroke in a few days."

† Grahame's Hist. U. S., iv. 463: "Nathaniel Greene, the greatest military genius that America produced in the Revolutionary War."

tinguished for their impetuous courage. His descent was good: O'Sullivan, the paternal ancestor, was Lord of Beerhaven in County Kerry, "well known as the most beautiful tract in the British isles." * On his mother's side were men who had fallen in the defence of Ireland when it was reduced by the Prince of Orange. His father was a scholar, and, emigrating to America, acquired a livelihood giving instruction in the classics.

From him Sullivan obtained an education above that of his fellows, and caught the fire which lighted him along his distinguished career.

In December seventy-four, receiving news of the prohibition to export gunpowder to the colonies, at the head of a small party in a bright, freezing night, with a "two-oared gondola," Sullivan dropped down the Piscataqua, increased his numbers at Portsmouth, scaled the fort at the entrance of the harbor, overpowered the garrison, and carried off its powder and small arms, secreting a part under the pulpit of the old meeting house at Durham.†

Here he commenced the practice of the law, and signalized by his ardent temper, was, at the outbreak of the revolution, elected to represent New Hampshire in the first Continental Congress. There he commanded respect and confidence. Having been chosen a delegate to the second Congress, in the selection of the general staff, he was commissioned one of the eight brigadiers first appointed, and took the command of a brigade then on duty near Boston. His influence induced the New Hampshire troops to continue in the service while others were departing, and he was active in obtaining supplies and ammunition in this early time of need. Ordered to Canada when the posts could be no longer held, his retreat was

* See Macaulay's exquisite description.—*Hist. of England*, iv. 107.

† Capt. Bennett's Narrative. See also Force.

masterly. Thence he joined the army at New York, and was captured in the battle of Long Island. Being exchanged, he resumed his command. He entered Trenton at the head of his column and carried it while the other bodies were coming up; and at Princeton was in the front of his line, under the fire of the enemy.

Washington describes him as "active, spirited, and ardently attached to the cause. That he does not want abilities, many members of Congress can testify; but he has his wants and his foibles. The latter are manifested in his little tincture of vanity, and in an over-desire of being popular, which now and then lead him into embarrassments," but he has "an enterprising genius."

Of strong purpose, never shrinking from duty, he was selected for stations which demanded energy and intrepidity, qualities that never failed him.

The first regiment of artillery on the continental establishment had been confided to Henry Knox, a native of Boston. Taking an early and an active part in concerting opposition to the restrictive acts of Parliament, he showed his devotion to liberty by leaving a lucrative employment, and joining the army as a volunteer in the battle of Bunker's Hill.

Alarmed at the deficiency of ordnance, which gave the enemy vast superiority, Knox, full of ardor, hastened to the Canadian frontier, where, by his personal exertions, amid the depths of winter, he was enabled in some measure to supply this want. His enterprise received the grateful approbation of the commander-in-chief. He was appointed a colonel of artillery, and upon the increase of that corps, was promoted to the command of a brigade.

Of high integrity, a sound understanding, a warm, brave heart, gay among his comrades, cool in battle, he was soon classed among those individuals to whom the

country might look with confidence in its greatest perils. Frank, liberal and sincere, he won and preserved the regard of his brother officers, and could boast that which was a passport to consideration, of being a man whom "Washington loved."

Another officer had also gained much of his confidence, General John Cadwallader, a gentleman of powerful connections in Jersey, Maryland and Pennsylvania. At the head of a body of volunteers from the latter State, he marched to the aid of the commander-in-chief in his retreat through New Jersey, and a most important and difficult share of the enterprise which expelled the enemy from the borders of the Delaware was confided to him. Upon the new organization of the army, the command of a brigade was offered to him and declined. But in all moments of difficulty he instantly repaired to head-quarters, his patriotism, nobleness, and ample fortune leaving no opening for a thought of personal interest, and ensuring him the welcome of the army.

The gentlemen who at this time composed the personal staff of the commander-in-chief, were Colonel Robert H. Harrison, a native of Maryland, who at an early age removed to Alexandria. There, as a member of the bar, he was employed by Washington, and soon after he had taken the command at Cambridge, was urgently invited by him to join his military family. "Sensible, clever, and perfectly confidential," he sacrificed his health to the arduous duties of his station. He was commonly known as the "Old Secretary." Discreet, ingenuous, fearless, an officer in whom every man had confidence, and by whom no man was deceived, he commanded universal respect. The other members of the staff were the generous and accomplished Tilghman of Maryland, and the amiable, chivalrous Meade of Virginia. Colonel Webb, who had been

wounded at Bunker's Hill, was first appointed aid by Putnam and then by Washington, in which capacity he served until the close of seventy-six, having been again wounded at White Plains and at Trenton.

Being promoted to the rank of colonel, he could no longer serve on the staff,* and his resignation gave place to Hamilton, who, as Washington states, became "his principal and most confidential aid." The intercourse of this military family was most kind; and the relation of Lafayette, that, during a familiar association of five years, no instance of disagreement occurred, is evidence of the tone of feeling which prevailed.

Harrison, who was much the elder, treated Hamilton with especial kindness, and soon after he joined the staff gave him the epithet by which he was familiarly known, of "the Little Lion."

* Colonel Samuel B. Webb was captured in 1777, by the sloop-of-war Falcon. A letter of Washington, declining to give him any preference of exchange, is one of the many evidences of the justice of his character. Being exchanged in 1782, Webb was promoted to the command of the light infantry, with the rank of Brigadier-General.

CHAPTER VII.

On his appointment to the staff of Washington, Lieutenant-colonel Hamilton, immediately after his recovery from a severe indisposition, induced by the hardships of the campaign, apprised the convention of New York of his change of situation, suggesting the transfer of his company to the Continental establishment. He did not omit to recommend to promotion an officer of merit.

A reply from Governeur Morris and Allison informed him that they, with Robert R. Livingston, had been appointed a committee of the convention to correspond with him at head-quarters, and concurred with him as to the disposal of his company. A frequent correspondence ensued.

Having served through the most arduous campaign of the Revolution, and having thus entitled himself to promotion in the line of the army, Hamilton hesitated much before he decided to relinquish this advantage for a place in the staff. He had already, as has been stated, declined a similar invitation from two general officers, but influenced by the reputation of the commander-in-chief, he entered upon the discharge of his new duties with all the devotion due to his early and illustrious friend.

The situation of aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chef, from the position he held, not merely of head of the

army, but as intermediate between Congress and numerous sovereign States * whose relations were not defined, was extremely arduous.

The pressure of the correspondence Washington principally felt. In the selection of his staff, he stated to Colonel Harrison, "as to military knowledge, I do not find gentlemen much skilled in it; if they can write a good letter, write quick, are methodical and diligent, it is all I expect to find in my aides."

Of these the changes had been frequent. As yet but one individual approached the desired standard in respect to education and ability—Colonel Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania. "That I feel the want of you," Washington wrote to him during a temporary absence, "yourself can judge, when I inform you that the peculiar situation of Mr. Randolph's † affairs obliged him to leave this soon after you did; that Mr. Baylor, contrary to my expectation, is not in the smallest degree a penman, though spirited and willing, and that Mr. Harrison, though sensible, clever, and perfectly confidential, has never yet moved upon so large a scale as to comprehend at one view the diversity of matter which comes before me, so as to afford that ready assistance which every man in my situation must stand more or less in need of." ‡ A few weeks after he again writes him: "Real necessity compels me to ask you whether I can entertain any hopes of your returning to my family? If you can make it convenient, and will hint the matter to Col. Harrison, I dare venture to say that Congress will make it agreeable to you in every shape they can. My business increases very fast, and my

* Washington to Congress, July 25, 1776.

† Edmund Randolph appointed A. D. C. in place of Mifflin, at the instance of R. H. Lee.

‡ Life of Reed, i. 127. Nov. 20, 1775.

distresses for want of you along with it. Mr. Harrison is the only gentleman of my family that can afford me the least assistance in writing." "At present my time is so much taken up at my desk, that I am obliged to neglect many other essential parts of my duty: it is absolutely necessary, therefore, for me to have persons that can think for me, as well as execute orders." *

It was to meet these requirements that he sought the services of Hamilton, to whom the preparation of most of the elaborate and important communications was confided. The extent of his services in this line, though not fully, is partially ascertained by reference to the records in the Department of State, where the original drafts of most of the correspondence from head-quarters during the Revolution exist, with the transcripts made by order of the government.

A few days before Hamilton retired from his staff, on the fourth of April, seventeen hundred and eighty-one, the commander-in-chief wrote to the President of Congress, from New Windsor. "The business that has given constant exercise to the pen of my secretary, and not only frequently but always to those of my aides-de-camp, has rendered it impracticable for the former to register the copies of my letters and instructions in books; by which means, valuable documents, which may be of equal public utility and private satisfaction, *remain in loose sheets, and in the rough manner in which they were first drawn.* This is not only attended with present inconvenience, but has a tendency to expose them to damage and to loss. Unless a set of writers are employed for the sole purpose of recording them, it will not be in my power to accomplish this necessary work; and it will be equally impracticable, perhaps, to preserve from injury and loss such valuable

* Life of Reed, i. 146. Nov. 20, 1775.

papers." * The letter concludes with a request of permission to engage copyists, which was granted.

The amount and extent of the labor of his staff is stated in a letter from Washington to Congress. "I give in to no kind of amusements myself, and consequently those about me can have none, but are confined from morning till evening, hearing and answering the applications and letters of one and another, which will now, I expect, receive a considerable addition, as the business of the northern and eastern departments, if I continue here, must, I suppose, pass through my hands. If these gentlemen had the same relaxation from duty as other officers have in their common routine, there would not be so much in it. But to have the mind always upon the stretch, scarce ever unbent, and no hours for recreation, makes a material odds. Knowing this, and at the same time how inadequate the pay is, I can scarce find inclination to impose the necessary duties of their office upon them." †

Amid the various high duties which engrossed him, the attention of Washington was at this time particularly directed to a negotiation relative to the exchange of prisoners—a matter of not easy adjustment—and in a civil war, such as this, which England could only treat as a rebellion, attended with great embarrassments.

The capture of St. Johns in the preceding autumn, first placed this matter before Congress. In a spirit not less dictated by a liberal view of the interests of nations at war, than by the calls of humanity, they immediately directed an equal exchange of prisoners, which was followed by successive resolutions, giving them a choice of residence, directing them to be treated with kindness, making the same provision for them as for their own

* Washington's Writings, vii. 467.

† Washington's Writings, iii. 369. April 23, 1776.

troops; appointing a commissioned officer to protect them from neglect, and assigning the punctual payment of their allowances as the especial duty of the president of each convention, or of the speakers of the assemblies.

These regulations were strictly enforced, and every instance of inattention promptly redressed.

The measures of the commander-in-chief fully corresponded with the policy of Congress.

An opposite line of conduct had been adopted by the enemy, little in consonance with the character and feelings of the British people. The greatest indignation was excited in both countries by recitals of the indignities to which the captured Americans had been subjected. Of these the most flagrant instance was that of Ethan Allen by General Prescott, which led to a correspondence on the part of Washington with Howe, in the tone of which the latter had the advantage. Terms of exchange had been settled with him before the preceding campaign, but, in his successful career, they had been departed from.

The capture of Fort Washington had much increased the number of American prisoners, showing, at the end of seventy-six, a considerable aggregate in favor of the British. Being chiefly a class of men who had suffered few privations, the captured colonists clamored loudly at restrictions unavoidable, and excesses without palliation. The situation of General Lee, who had been taken to New York, was at this moment of especial interest. Congress, on learning this event, had offered in exchange six field-officers of inferior rank, one of whom was Colonel Campbell, a Highland soldier and member of Parliament. This offer was rejected, and Lee was placed in confinement, with an intimation that his treatment would be different from that of prisoners of war.

Indignant at this procedure, Congress instantly or-

dered Campbell and the Hessian officers into close custody; and threatened retaliation for every indignity offered to the Americans. Campbell, being confined to the jail in Concord, wrote to Washington. The reply, dated on the day of his appointment as aide, was written by Hamilton: "I am not invested with the powers you suppose, and it is incompatible with my authority as with my inclination to contravene any determination Congress may make. But as it does not appear to me that your present treatment is required by any resolution of theirs, but is the result of misconception, I have written my opinion of the matter to Colonel Bowdoin,* which I imagine will procure a mitigation of what you suffer. I shall always be happy to manifest my disinclination to any undue severities towards those whom the fortune of war may chance to throw into my hands." A letter was also written to Congress: "Retaliation is certainly just, and sometimes necessary, even where attended with the severest penalties; but, when the evils which may and must result from it exceed those intended to be redressed, prudence and policy require that it should be avoided." "The present state of our army, if it deserves that name, will not authorize the language of retaliation or the style of menace." Congress did not yield, having refused a request of Lee for a conference with him; of which refusal he complained sorely. An effort was again made to establish a cartel, but the English commissioner displayed a temper little favorable to a happy issue. It seemed rather to have been his design to indulge in arrogant crimination, than to promote an object mutually beneficial. The importance of meeting the charges made was strongly felt, and the task of vindicating the course which had been adopted, was confided to Hamilton. "The pen for our

* President of Massachusetts.

army," says Troup, "was held by Hamilton; and for dignity of manner, pith of matter, and elegance of style, General Washington's letters are unrivalled in military annals."

The negotiation of a cartel failed in consequence of the determination of Howe not to include Lee within the class of American prisoners, but was attended with flattering consequences. The correspondence increased the esteem in which the American character was held in Europe, and was proudly referred to as another evidence that the advocates of liberty were not less accomplished with the pen than with the sword.

Previous to the opening of the campaign, delayed by the severity of winter and by hoped reinforcements on the part of the enemy, Hamilton in behalf of Washington wrote to the governor of Georgia informing him of orders given to the American General Howe, commanding there, to consult with him and with the president of South Carolina as to "the propriety of making an attempt upon St. Augustine. The good consequences," he observed, "that will certainly result from such an expedition, if attended with success, are too obvious to escape your notice, and lead me to hope for a ready compliance with the requisition; if it shall appear, after due consideration had of all circumstances, that the enterprise would have a fortunate and favorable issue." This was the first step towards an extension of the southern bounds of this republic and the command of the Gulf of Mexico, of which Hamilton was a steadfast advocate.

When the season for military operations approached, the greatest anxiety pervaded the United States, in their defenceless condition, as to the movements of the enemy.

Hamilton, having expressly cautioned the convention of New York to distinguish between his own sentiments

and those of "the General," again wrote them. The concentration of an army in the north, and the obvious policy of seizing the passes in the Highlands of the Hudson, seemed to indicate them as a first object. Thus the campaign might be commenced earlier than in Pennsylvania, as the army would in one case move by water, and, having the command of that important river, might in a few hours destroy the boats provided on its banks, prevent Washington from crossing until they had reached Albany, and after ravaging the interior of New York, enter Connecticut on the western side, where the disaffection of a part of the people would ensure them many friends. This course, it is stated, had been indicated in the instructions from London, which directed a squadron to make a diversion on the coast of New England, thus to induce the withdrawal of a part of the troops composing the northern army, and to check the progress of enlistment for the main body.* This view Hamilton did not take. "It seems to be an opinion," he wrote on the second of March, "supported by the best reasons, that the main object with which they will open the campaign will be the capture of Philadelphia. If so, they will have a greater probability of success by co-operating both by sea and land; and the preparations for this, added to the dangers of making an attempt by water at too early a season, will in all likelihood protract the execution of their project, at least till the time I have mentioned—the beginning of May."

An expedition to Peekskill late in March, where large munitions of war were supposed to be collected, and which the gallantry of Colonel Willett prevented from being more disastrous, and the destruction of the stores at Danbury where Wooster fell, shook this opinion. "I congratulate you," Hamilton wrote, "on the late impor-

* Hamilton's Works, i. 15.

tant arrivals to the eastward. We consider them as immense acquisitions. I congratulate you, also, on the Danbury expedition. The stores destroyed there have been purchased at a pretty high price to the enemy. The spirit of the people on the occasion does them great honor, is a pleasing proof that they have lost nothing of that primitive zeal with which they began the contest; and will be a galling discouragement to the enemy from repeating attempts of the kind. Such an opposition, under such circumstances, was not to be expected. By every account, both from our friends and from themselves, they cannot have sustained a loss of less than five hundred, killed, wounded, and taken."

The enemy about this time made a movement upon Amboy. Hamilton, immediately on learning their purpose, wrote in behalf of Washington this cautionary letter to Lord Stirling, in command of a body of Continentals and some Jersey troops.*

"I have just now received information, and I believe it is well founded, that the enemy have formed a design during the suspension of more important operations, to amuse themselves in endeavoring to surprise our outposts. I communicate this, to put you upon your guard, that you may take proper steps to counteract them, and secure us from the disagreeable consequences of a surprise at any of the posts under your direction.

"Let me recommend to you as much as circumstances will permit, to make your parties change their quarters every night or two. The deception arising from this measure will embarrass the enemy, and by making it diffi-

* William Alexander, called Lord Stirling, by courtesy. He served in the war of 1756, and claimed the earldom of Stirling, but was unsuccessful. He was appointed from New Jersey, where he had exerted an important influence in the movements to Independence.

cult for them to find you out, will enable you not only to disappoint them in their project, but perhaps make the intended surprise react upon them, and derive advantages from it to ourselves. In order to this, it will be proper to have scouts or spies continually near their quarters to give the earliest notice of any movement of the kind.

"I have been likewise informed that they have spies at our several posts. I must beg you will exert yourself to detect them, and prevent the evil effects that must attend their being among us. To have your artillery in order for every casualty that may happen, it will be highly necessary to have them immediately and frequently put into a condition for marching; to see that the number of horses is completed, the tackling, waggons and carriages, sufficient and sound, and every thing else in proper order."

"This advance of the enemy," Hamilton wrote the convention of New York, "it is conjectured, is with a view to the Delaware, and the supposition is confirmed by the circumstance of a confederacy lately detected at Philadelphia, who, among other things, were endeavoring to engage persons as pilots up that river.

"The extreme difficulties they must labor under for want of forage, and the infinite hazard they must run by moving with a small body of about five thousand men, with an enemy in the rear, incapable of sparing any considerable body of troops to form a post behind, and be an asylum to them in case of accident; these circumstances will hardly allow me to think they will be daring enough to make the attempt at this time. But on the other hand, as they know we are in a progressive state as to numbers, and other matters of importance, and as they have no prospect of early reinforcements, and are in a state of uncertainty as to any, from the bustling aspect of European affairs, it is possible they may conceive a necessity

of making a push at all risks. Perhaps, however, this embarkation is intended for some other purpose; to make a diversion, or execute some partisan exploit elsewhere. On the whole, I find it difficult to believe they are yet ready for any capital operation.

"As to your apprehensions of an attempt up the North River, I imagine you may discard any uneasiness on that score, although it will be at all times advisable to be on the watch against such a contingency. It is almost reduced to a certainty, that the principal views of the enemy, in the ensuing campaign, will be directed towards the southward, and to Philadelphia more immediately; of which idea, the discovery before mentioned, with respect to pilots, is no inconsiderable confirmation. Philadelphia is an object calculated to strike and attract their attention. It has all along been the main source of supplies towards the war, and the getting it into their possession would deprive us of a wheel we could very badly spare, in the great political and military machine. They are sensible of this, and are equally sensible, that it contains in itself, and is surrounded by a prodigious number of persons attached to them, and inimical to us, who would lend them all the assistance they could in the further prosecution of their designs. It is also a common and well-grounded rule in war, to strike first and principally at the capital towns and cities, in order to the conquest of a country.

"I must confess I do not see any object equally interesting to draw their efforts to the northward. Operations merely for plundering and devastation can never answer their end; and if they could, one part of the continent would do nearly as well as another. And as to the notion of forming a junction with the northern army, and cutting off the communication between the Northern and Southern States, I apprehend it will do better in specula-

tion than in practice. Unless the geography of the country is far different from any thing I can conceive, to effect this would require a chain of posts, and such a number of men at each, as would never be practicable or maintainable, but to an immense army. In their progress, by hanging upon their rear, and seizing every opportunity of skirmishing, their situation might be rendered insupportably uneasy.

"But for fear of mistake, the general has determined to collect a considerable body of troops at or about Peekskill, which will not be drawn off till the intentions of the enemy have acquired a decisive complexion. These will be ready, according to conjunctures, either to proceed northerly or southerly, as may be requisite. Every precaution should be taken to prevent the boats from being destroyed, by collecting them at the first movement of the enemy under cover of one of the forts, or into some inlet, difficult of access and easily defensible with a small number of men. The loss of them would be an irreparable disadvantage.

"The enemy's attempt upon Peekskill is a demonstration of the folly of having any quantity of stores at places so near the water, and so much exposed to a sudden inroad. There should never be more there than sufficient to answer present demands. We have lost a good deal in this way at different times, and I hope experience will at last make us wiser.

"His excellency lately had a visit from the Oneida chief and five others. He managed them with a good deal of address, and sent them away perfectly satisfied. He persuaded them to go to Philadelphia, but they declined it, alleging their impatience to return, and remove the erroneous opinions of their countrymen, from the misrepresentations of British emissaries, which they were appre-

hensive might draw them into some rash proceedings. They parted, after having made the most solemn protestations of friendship and good will. His excellency has been very busy all day in despatching the southern post, which has prevented me giving him your resolve. It will, no doubt, be very acceptable; and it is with pleasure I inform you, that the zeal and abilities of the New York convention hold the first rank in his estimation.

"No news from France, save that the Congress have obtained a credit there, for which they can draw bills to the amount of £100,000 sterling. This will be extremely serviceable in carrying on a trade with the French. The new troops begin to come in. If we can shortly get any considerable accession of strength, we may be able to strike some brilliant stroke."

A few days after he again wrote: "By several persons who have come out of New York within these few days, it is pretty well confirmed that they have constructed a bridge to be laid upon boats, for the purpose, in all probability, of crossing the Delaware.

"The new levies begin to come in from the southward, but not in such large numbers as could be wished. It is to be hoped, however, that we shall shortly be sufficiently reinforced to give an effectual obstruction to their designs.

The Congress have resolved, if the general approves, to form a camp on the west side of the Delaware, and have called upon Pennsylvania to furnish three thousand militia to join the same. Every nerve must and will be strained to prevent Philadelphia falling into the enemy's hands. It is a place of infinite importance."

On the seventeenth of April he again addressed the committee, giving a particular account of an attack at Boundbrook upon the troops under General Lincoln; in-

forming them that three of the enemy's vessels had entered the Delaware; that a vessel from France had been attacked in the river, and to prevent her falling into their hands, had been blown up.

A letter of the same date from a member of Congress* in Philadelphia depicts the state of feeling there at this time. "I am extremely sorry to inform you, that notwithstanding the invasion which threatens this city, a languor prevails amongst the inhabitants of almost all ranks. The disputes about their constitution and a want of vigilance and vigor in detecting and defeating the designs of the disaffected, have given the malignants a dangerous ascendency. The depreciation of the continental money is astonishingly rapid, and I see, with concern, that no attempts are made to check so fatal a measure. You will see by the enclosed resolutions of Congress of the fourteenth and fifteenth of April, that they have been *under the necessity of supplying an executive* authority in this State.

"By the recess of the supreme executive council, there was an absolute interregnum; and if *Congress had not interposed*, this State would have fallen an easy prey to a very small body of the enemy's army. I have the pleasure to assure the convention, that the State of New York stands in a very high point of light in the eyes of the continent, and that General Washington, in his public letters to Congress, gives the most honorable testimonials in its favor. These, sir, are the happy effects of its unanimity and vigor." He adds: "The disputes in Pennsylvania grew out of no want of attachment to the cause, but from disputes about the constitution. I wish the establishment of new forms of government had been deferred. The union, vigor and security, derived from conventions and

* William Duer to Abraham Ten Broeck.

committees are not to be found in any State under its new constitution."

In a private letter of this period,* Washington also adverts to the state of the currency. "That Great Britain will exert every nerve to carry her tyrannical designs into execution, I have not the smallest doubt—her very existence as a nation depends now upon her success, for should America rise triumphant in her struggle for independence, she must fall. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, after she has departed from that line of justice which ought to characterize a virtuous people, that she should descend to such low arts and dirty tricks as will for ever remain a reproach to her; none of which has she practised with more success, and, I fear, with more dangerous consequences to our cause, than her endeavors to depreciate the continental bills of credit. Nothing, therefore, has a greater claim to the close attention of Congress than the counteraction of this part of her diabolical scheme. Every thing depends upon it." Urging there should be no relaxation in measures of resistance, he adds, "I profess myself to be of that class who never built sanguinely upon the assistance of France, farther than her winking at our supplies from thence for the benefits derived from our trade, and how far the measures and offers of Great Britain may contravene this, time only can discover, and is somewhat to be feared."

The constitution of New York, recently established † by the convention of that State, was made public at this time. Hamilton's attention was called to it in a letter from Gouverneur Morris, a member of the body.

Looking to the recent proceedings as to Pennsylvania and to this act, there is presented to the view one of the most remarkable scenes in the drama of the American

* Washington to R. H. Lee.—*Lee's Memoir*, ii. p. 12. † April 20, 1777.

revolution. At the same moment, the Congress of the United States, by their assumed unlimited power, unhesitatingly submitted to, are seen instituting an executive authority in a State; and the other States are beheld, in the midst of a war for their existence, forming strictly limited governments, in all of which were provisions to hold the general Congress under their absolute control. At the same moment, this Congress are seen conferring upon a military chief of their own creation, dictatorial powers, and the separate States are beheld tenaciously reserving to themselves the appointment of the officers to execute the commands of that chief.

The former were acts of high necessity, expressly avowed to have been done to provide "for the general welfare of the United States." The latter indicate the pervading distrust of a general governing power consequent to abuses by a sovereign they had rejected, and were resisting.

Magna Charta and the succeeding guards to liberty established by the wisdom of England, formed the basis of these State constitutions. But their structure shows the quick vibration from confiding devotion to a monarch, to the jealous caution of democracy. Contests with the representatives of the monarch had prepared the colonists, in a measure, for self-government; and had taught them that safety would only be found in a government by representatives of the people. Thus, representative democracies were the natural fruits of the revolution; and in organizing them, the prevailing effort would be to render the executive authority, dependent, feeble, of short duration.

The first government instituted under a recommendation of Congress was that of New Hampshire in January, seventy-six.

A letter from General Sullivan, who had been consulted as to the form to be established, shows the state of public opinion. "I can by no means consent to lodge too much power in the hands of one person, or suffering an interest in government to exist separate from that of the people, or any man to hold office for the execution of which he is not, in some way or other, answerable to that people to whom he owes his political existence."

The course of New Hampshire showed the extent of this feeling. Its constitution did not provide a governor. A House of Representatives, elected annually by the towns, chose a council of twelve persons, who chose a presiding officer. This officer, called the "President of the Council," performed the undefined duties of a governor, and was, at the same time, appointed judge of the superior court. This imperfect scheme existed until near the end of the revolution.

In March, the Provincial Congress of South Carolina organized themselves as a general assembly of the colony, framing a constitution. This assembly was authorized to elect by ballot from its own body a legislative council, and these jointly were to choose a president and a privy council by ballot. This temporary constitution gave place soon after to another, by which a rotation in office was secured, and more popular elements introduced.

In New Jersey, a legislature of two branches was also elected annually, and they chose an annual governor. In Virginia, one branch of the legislature and the governor were annually chosen, the latter by the legislature who was only re-eligible for three successive years, and was controlled by a council chosen by joint ballot of the legislature, whose term of office was of several years. His powers were few, his patronage small. Maryland also chose her governor annually by her legislature of

two branches, who was likewise controlled by a council elected annually by the same body. He also was re-eligible for only three consecutive years: his powers very limited and guarded. The constitutions of Delaware and North Carolina were in these respects similar. All these frames of government were made in the course of the year seventy-six. Connecticut and Rhode Island remained, under their charter systems a little modified, of a very popular cast, and in part models of those recently instituted.

The constitution of New York, at this moment completed, established a legislature of two branches, the senate, like that of Virginia and of Maryland, being of longer duration than the other branch, and changed successively by rotation; chosen, as was the governor, by freeholders.

His term of office was three years, and his powers were larger than those conferred by the other States. Here his patronage, power and responsibility were sought to be checked by councils, one exercising conjointly with him, the power of revising and rejecting the acts of legislation, the other that of appointments.

This plan of government was believed to be chiefly the production of Jay, to whom Rutledge of South Carolina wrote: "Vest the executive powers of government in an individual, that they may have vigor, and let them be as ample as is consistent with the great outlines of freedom."

The larger executive powers conferred by it was the result of obvious causes. The seaboard of the State was at this moment in possession of the enemy, its interior frontier was menaced by them, many of its inhabitants were disaffected. Its safety demanded a prompt exertion of all its resources, to which it had been habituated during its colonial existence. "Our constitution," Jay writes,

"is universally approved, even in New England, where few New York productions have credit."

Hamilton's views of it are given in his letters to Gouverneur Morris.

"I thank you for the favor of the pamphlet containing your form of government, which, without flattery, I consider as far more judicious and digested than any thing of the kind that has yet appeared among us; though I am not so unreserved in my approbation as to think it free from defects. While I view it in the main as a wise and excellent system, I freely confess it appears to me to have some faults which I could wish did not exist. Were it not too late to discuss particulars for any useful end, or could my judgment have any weight in a matter which is the work of so many far more able and discerning than I can pretend to be, I should willingly descend to an exhibition of those parts I dislike, and my reasons for disapproving. But, in the present situation of things, it would be both useless and presumptuous."

Morris answered, "I am very happy to find that our form of government meets with your approbation. That there are faults in it is not to be wondered at, for it is the work of men, and of men, perhaps, not the best qualified for such undertakings. I think it deficient for want of vigor in the executive; unstable, from the very nature of popular elective governments; and dilatory, from the complexity of the legislature.

"For the first, I apologize by hinting the spirit which now reigns in America, suspiciously cautious. For the second, because unavoidable. For the third, because a simple legislature soon possesses itself of too much power for the safety of its subjects. God grant it may work well, for we must live under it."

Hamilton answered: "I partly agree and partly disa-

gree with you respecting the deficiencies of our constitution. That there is a want of vigor in the executive, I believe will be found true. To determine the qualifications proper for the chief executive magistrate requires the deliberate wisdom of a select assembly, and cannot safely be lodged with the people at large. That instability is inherent in the nature of popular governments, I think very disputable; unstable democracy is an epithet frequently in the mouths of politicians; but I believe that from a strict examination of the matter—from the records of history, it will be found that the fluctuations of governments in which the popular principle has borne a considerable sway, have proceeded from its being compounded with other principles; and from its being made to operate in an improper channel. Compound governments, though they may be harmonious in the beginning, will introduce distinct interests, and these interests will clash, throw the State into convulsions, and produce a change or dissolution. When the deliberative or judicial powers are vested wholly or partly in the collective body of the people, you must expect error, confusion and instability. But a REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY, where the right of election is well secured and regulated, and the exercise of the legislative, executive, and judiciary authorities is vested in select persons, chosen really and not nominally by the people will, in my opinion, be most likely to be happy, regular and durable. That the complexity of your legislature will occasion delay and dilatoriness is evident, and I fear may be attended with a much greater evil; as expedition is not very material in making laws, especially when the government is well digested and matured by time. The evil, I mean, is, that in time your Senate, from the very name, and from the mere circumstance of its being a separate member of the legislature,

will be liable to degenerate into a body purely aristocratical.

And I think the abuse of power from a simple legislature would not be very great in a government where the equality and fulness of popular representation is so wisely provided for as in yours. On the whole, though I think these are the defects intimated, I think your government far the best that we have yet seen, and capable of giving long and substantial happiness to the people. Objections should be suggested with great caution and reserve."

The qualified opinion here expressed of the durability of representative democracies is not without color of authority.*

The distrust of a Senate, as verging towards aristocracy, was the transient emotion of a youthful mind, to which the vista of human happiness in modern institutions was opening in all its beauty and grandeur. It soon gave place to wiser views.

The efforts of the disaffected Americans were now a source of serious alarm. In New York the enemy had formed bodies of troops composed of them and of British and Irish refugees under the command of men driven from their colonial stations; and with embittered feelings, eager to wage unrelenting hostilities upon those they had recently governed. Of these was Tryon, with the rank of major-general, conspicuous in the recent incendiary inroads upon Connecticut. Hamilton, sensible of the great importance of marking the true line of policy to be adopted as to so delicate and difficult a matter, now wrote to the convention of New York, deprecating the substitution of tyranny for discriminating energy. "The disposition of the convention, with respect to the disaffected

* Montesquieu's Esprit des Loix. "Republique Federative," i. 391.

among you, is highly commendable, and justified by every principle of equity and policy. The necessity of exemplary punishment throughout the States, is become evident beyond a doubt, and it were to be wished every one of the thirteen would imitate the judicious conduct of New York. Lenity and forbearance have been tried too long to no purpose; it is high time to discard what the clearest experience has shown to be ineffectual.

"But in dispensing punishment, the utmost care and caution ought to be used. The power of doing it, or even of bringing the guilty to trial, should be placed in hands that know well how to use it. I believe it would be a prudent rule to meddle with none but those whose crimes are supported by very sufficient evidence, and are of a pretty deep dye. The apprehending innocent persons, or those whose offences are of so slender a nature as to make it prudent to dismiss them, furnishes an occasion of triumph, and a foundation for a species of animadversion which is very injurious to the public cause. Persons so apprehended generally return home worse than they were, and by expatiating on their sufferings, first excite the pity towards themselves and afterwards the abhorrence towards their persecutors, of those with whom they converse. I believe it would also be, in general, a good rule, either to pardon offenders entirely, or to inflict capital and severe punishments. The advice given by a certain general to his son, when the latter had the Roman army in his power, was certainly very politic; he advised him either to destroy them utterly, or to dismiss them with every mark of honor and respect. By the first method, says he, you disable the Romans from being your enemies; by the last, you make them your friends. So with respect to the tories; I would either disable them from doing us any injury, or I would endeavor to gain

their friendship by clemency. Inflicting trifling punishments only embitters the minds of those on whom they fall, and increases their disposition to do mischief without taking away the power of doing it.

"I shall communicate your additional resolve to the general, and consult him on what you mention, and shall let you know his opinion in my next; mine, however, is, that those who appear to be of such a character as to be susceptible of reformation, should be employed; but it is a delicate point.

"As to news, the most material is, that from intelligence received from Rhode Island, it appears the enemy are abandoning it. This is a preparatory step to the intended operations of the enemy.

"In a private letter from Philadelphia, I am informed that a treaty of a very particular nature is on the point of being concluded between the court of France and the States of America. There is a prospect of opening a trade with Sweden."

The same spirit is seen in a letter written by Hamilton to Governor Livingston:

"A number of disaffected persons having been taken up and brought to his Excellency, he has ordered an examination into their cases to know who of them were subject to a military jurisdiction, and who came properly under the cognizance of the civil power; also to discriminate those who were innocent or guilty of trivial offences from those whose crimes were of a more capital and heinous nature, directing that those of the former character should be dismissed, and those of the latter referred to you for further trial and punishment. The examination, at which I was present, has been accordingly made, and the enclosed list of names will inform you of those who have been deemed proper subjects for a legal prose-

cution; and who are herewith sent under guard to be disposed of as you shall direct. I have transmitted you a bundle of papers, in which you will find the information and evidence that support the charges against them, and the confession they made in the court of inquiry. Many of them have nothing against them but what is to be found in their own acknowledgments. How far these may operate in fixing their guilt you can best determine. Several of them have been taken in arms, and others were beyond a doubt employed in enlisting men for the service of the enemy. You will readily concur with his Excellency in the obvious necessity of inflicting exemplary punishment on such daring offenders, to repress that insolent spirit of open and avowed enmity to the American cause, which, unhappily, is too prevalent in this and some of the States."

"The examination," he also writes, "in this instance is somewhat irregular and out of the common order of things. But in the present unsettled state of government, the distinction between the civil and military powers cannot be upheld with that exactness which every friend to society must wish. His Excellency desires to avoid nothing more, I flatter myself you will believe me, than deviations from the strict rules of propriety in this respect, or the least encroachments either upon the rights of the citizen or of the magistrate. It was necessary to make inquiry for the sake of the discrimination before mentioned, and tenderness to the innocent to save them from long and unmerited confinement, commended the measure."

A few days after, he again wrote: "A spirit of disaffection shows itself with so much boldness and violence in different parts of this State, that it is the ardent wish of his Excellency, no delay which can be avoided might

be used in making examples of some most atrocious offenders. If something be not speedily done, to strike a terror into the disaffected, the consequences must be very disagreeable. Among others, all security to the friends of the American cause will be destroyed; and the natural effect of this will be an extinction of zeal in seconding and promoting it. Their attachment, if it remain, will be a dead, inactive, useless principle. And the disaffected, emboldened by impunity, will be encouraged to proceed to the most dangerous and pernicious lengths." Soon after he wrote in behalf of Washington to Congress: "In this State" (New Jersey), "I have strong assurance that the spirit of disaffection has risen to a great height; and I shall not be disappointed, if a large number of the inhabitants in some of the counties should openly appear in arms, as soon as the enemy begin their operations. I have taken every measure in my power to suppress it, but nevertheless, several from Jersey and Bergen have joined their army, and the spirit becomes more and more daring every day." The correspondence as to the exchange of prisoners having been resumed by General Howe, his letter was enclosed to Congress, with a comment in behalf of Washington by Hamilton.

"As General Howe has called upon me again for my final decision upon the subject, and Congress are fully possessed of it, having received transcripts of every paper respecting it, I wish them to take the matter under their earliest consideration, and to inform me as soon as they can, whether the grounds on which it has been conducted by me, are agreeable to their ideas, and whether my objections are or are not to be departed from. * * * The dispute, so far as General Lee is concerned, rests at present on their declaring him exchangeable, as other prisoners are, on the principle of equality of rank, to ensure

which, or his safety, Lieutenant-colonel Campbell and the Hessian field officers are detained. The other objection to returning their prisoners is, that a great proportion of those sent out by them were not fit subjects of exchange when released, and were made so by the severity of their treatment and confinement, and, therefore, a deduction should be made from the list.

"Good faith seems to require that we should return as many of theirs, at least, as we received effectives from them; I mean such as could be considered capable of being exchanged; and perhaps sound policy, that the agreement subsisting for exchanges would continue. On the other hand, it may be said, that our prisoners, in general, in the enemy's hands at present, will have greater security by our retaining them, and that General Howe will be less apt to relinquish any part of his claim the more the number in our hands is diminished by an exchange.

"I confess I am under great difficulty in this business. But what is more particularly the cause of this application, is the latter part of the first paragraph of the enclosed copy: '*and for your determination respecting the prisoners now here, that I may make my arrangements accordingly.*' This is couched in terms of great ambiguity; and I am really at a loss what interpretation to give it; whether he intends that his conduct respecting them shall be as I advise (this appears more favorable than can well be expected), or that, if the previous demand is not answered in a satisfactory manner, he shall consider them on a different footing from that on which our former prisoners were, and the agreement totally dissolved. We are told Government offered the prisoners they took to the India Company, and they have procured an act dispensing with that of the *habeas corpus* in particular cases of per-

sons supposed inimical to them. How far they or their commanders may adopt these measures, remains to be known. I have only mentioned them as respects the general subject of my letter.

"Notwithstanding my recommendation, agreeably to what I conceived to be the sense of Congress, Lieutenant-colonel Campbell's treatment continues to be such as cannot be justified either on the principles of generosity or strict retaliation; as I have authentic information, and I doubt not you will have the same, that General Lee's situation is far from being rigorous or uncomfortable. Except his not being permitted to go at large on parole, he has reason to be content with every other circumstance of his treatment."

General Lee had recently stated that he had been "treated in all respects with kindness, generosity, and tenderness."

On being apprised of this, Congress resolved that similar conduct be observed towards Campbell and the Hessian officers.

Four days after the date of this letter, "the enemy," as Hamilton states, "perpetrated a most barbarous butchery upon a Lieutenant Martin of ours. He was out with a scouting party, and met some of the British light-horse; his men, it is said, quitted him. But however other matters may be, it is certain his dead body was found most horribly mangled. He had not a single bullet-wound, but was hacked to pieces with the sword; he had several cuts on his head, each of which was sufficient to despatch him, besides a number of more inconsiderable scars about his body and hands. It is evident that the most wanton and unnecessary cruelty must have been used towards him; for the greater part of his wounds must have been given him when utterly out of a condition to resist. This may

be relied on as a fact, for I saw his corpse, as did also every officer and soldier in camp that chose it. The general sent him down to their lines with a letter to Lord Cornwallis, as an undeniable evidence of their brutality, but the letter was taken from the flag and sent in; the flag and the body not permitted to pass their outposts." It * was brought to the post of Sir George Osborne, who with much admired *sang froid*, simply returned for answer, "that he was no coroner."

The letter, written by Hamilton for Washington, was in these terms: "It is with infinite regret I am again compelled to remonstrate against that spirit of wanton cruelty that has in several instances influenced the conduct of your soldiery. A recent exercise of it towards an unhappy officer of ours, Lieutenant Martin, convinces me that my former representations on this subject have been unavailing. That gentleman, by the fortune of war, on Saturday last, was thrown into the hands of a party of your horse, and unnecessarily murdered with the most aggravated circumstances of barbarity. I wish not to wound your lordship's feelings by commenting on this event; but I think it my duty to send his mangled body to your lines as an undeniable testimony of the fact, should it be doubted, and as the best appeal to your humanity for the justice of our complaint."

The answer is not known, but its character may be inferred from this reply in the close of a letter, also from Hamilton's pen: "I cannot forbear taking this occasion to remark, that it appears to me not a little singular to find a gallant discharge of duty in an officer, assigned as a reason for exercising the greatest barbarity towards him. I confess I should imagine that the eye of generosity would rather view it as a motive for applause and tender-

* Graydon's Memoirs, 266.

ness." "The fact," he states, "was admitted and justified."

Howe at this time pressing a final decision as to the exchange of prisoners, Hamilton, in behalf of Washington answered him in full.* This letter is a fine specimen of retaliatory vindication, not a little quickened in its tone by this recent outrage. It closed with the declaration of a wish that the difference between them should be "adjusted on a generous and equitable plan."

* June 10, 1777.

CHAPTER VIII.

Amid the conflicts of opinion between Congress and the State governments, its spasmodic action, now of energy, then of weakness, their confidence and their fears; it became obvious, that the success of the struggle would chiefly depend on skill to avoid and patience to endure, rather than on power to resist the aggressions of the enemy. What direction their force would take was still uncertain. Hamilton wrote to the convention of New York, the seventh of May: "From some late appearances, my opinion is greatly shaken as to the enemy's intention to move to Philadelphia. I begin to fear they will disappoint us with a contrary movement. The general is aware of this possibility, and will do every thing he can to provide for the event; and I trust the convention of your State will co-operate with him by every exertion in their power. By intelligence received yesterday and today, from Generals Putnam and Lincoln at the outposts, we have reason to suspect the enemy will soon evacuate Brunswick and push for Amboy, whence they will no doubt embark for some expedition by water. This may be either to Philadelphia or up the North River. Or, perhaps, the appearances that indicate this, may be only feints to perplex and deceive us. The testimony of every person that comes from them confirms this fact,

that their horses are in such miserable condition as to render them incapable of any material operations by land. If, therefore, proper care be taken, wherever they shall point their efforts, to prevent their collecting supplies of good horses among ourselves, I know not how it will be possible for them to penetrate any distance into the country. As far as it may depend upon them, I hope the convention will attend to this circumstance, and will take effective measures to put it out of their power to gain such supplies in any part of your State towards which they may direct their movements. Nothing particular from Europe." He soon again wrote: "It seems now fully the opinion of our generals that the last year's project for uniting the two armies by the conquest of your State will be prosecuted this campaign. To confirm this supposition, all the later intelligence we have received from the enemy, strongly indicates an intention to evacuate the Jerseys; and it is thought there will be very great obstacles to an attempt upon Philadelphia by way of the Delaware; it is concluded that the North River must be the object. And, upon this principle, Generals Greene and Knox, in whom his Excellency has great confidence, are sent to examine the situation of things with you, and, in concert with General McDougall, who is in equal estimation, to adopt every proper expedient for putting you in the best state of defence. They set out this day.

"If the enemy do not, in fact, aim at Philadelphia, they have been very artful in throwing out appearances well calculated to deceive, and which, though they have not had so full an effect as at any time to cause our cautious general to lose sight of the other object which it is now imagined they propose to themselves; yet they have so far deceived as to beget pretty universally the opinion they wished to impose. But, for my own part, though I

am staggered in my conjectures, yet I by no means give up my first supposition. I think it very probable they are only evacuating the Jerseys to be out of danger of an attack from us, which they have reason to fear from the increasing strength of our army, and mean to encamp on Staten Island till reinforced. It would be madness in them, weak as they are in numbers, to risk all in any capital attempt; and I am confident they will not do it unless they have a desperate game to play, and have no expectation of reinforcements. Such a conduct would be contrary to every principle of war or policy. Howe cannot take the field with more than eight thousand men; let him go where he will, the probability of a defeat will be strong, the consequences of it would be absolutely fatal. How can he hope to penetrate far with so small a force, and with such a miserable supply of horses to convey his artillery and baggage? It seems to me, too, with respect to the supposed design upon your State, if it really existed, they would have taken care to have seized your forts, and other important posts, when they might have been apprised you were in no condition to defend them.

"We have lately had one or two little skirmishes here. A party from Boundbrook beat up some of the enemy's advanced pickets from Brunswick. An attack was made upon their pickets near Bonumtown. We have no regular account of this matter, but what we have is to this purport: 'that a party under Col. Cook attacked one of their pickets and drove it in; that it was reinforced and sallied out again, and was beaten in a second time; that it received a second reinforcement and made a second sally; and that General Maxwell, who conducted the affair, perceiving the latter grow too serious by continual succors coming to them from Brunswick and Amboy, thought it best to retire which he did in good order, the enemy

keeping at a respectful distance during the whole time of their retrogradation. The royal Highlanders had taken possession of a wood by way of ambuscade, out of which they were expelled by our troops. Here, I believe, the principal loss was sustained on both sides."

A few days later Hamilton observes: "Nothing particular in the military line. The enemy still in the Jerseys, though they have been some time sending away their stores, baggage, and are raising new works of defence. All this may be preparatory to an evacuation at all events, and they may be only intended to pave the way for a retreat, in case of an attack or any accident.

"Advices from the West Indies that have an appearance of authenticity, mention a French vessel bound for the continent, being taken up by the British ship Perseus, and carried in to Dominique; and a remonstrance being made by the governor of Martinique, threatening reprisals in case of a detention. Nay, some accounts say, he has actually seized all the English vessels in the harbor of Martinique, and imprisoned their seamen till restitution shall be made. If these accounts be true, they are important, and may be considered as an earnest of more general hostility. Perhaps your next favor will find me at Boundbrook. Head-quarters will soon be moved there. Our family seem desirous of cultivating a closer acquaintance with the enemy than we have had the pleasure of for some time past."

The army now moved from Morristown to Middlebrook. The motives to this change of position are given in a letter of Hamilton to Gouverneur Morris: "June second;—I received your favor per express, and as the absence of my former respectable correspondents has made a change necessary, I am happy that you have been substituted in their room.

"Except a body of militia at and about Princeton, and a few detachments of observation, our whole army is now collected at two points; the main body here, and a division under General Sullivan at Princeton. Though this alteration of circumstances takes off in a great measure the restraints imposed upon the enemy during the winter, gives them a more ample field to range in, and exposes the country more to their ravages, yet the measure is abundantly justified by every wise military maxim. The rigor of the season has been heretofore our chief security against those advantages which might have been taken of our dispersed state; and this disposition was necessary both for the conveniency of winter-quarters, and with a view to confine and distress the enemy, which was the most capital object we could then propose to ourselves. It was also necessary by this method, to second the check to that torrent of influence which their successes in the Jerseys had given them. Many other justifying reasons might be assigned, which I doubt not you will easily conceive; and which it would be indiscreet to commit to paper.

"But now that a more active season is arrived, and something of importance must be done on one side or the other, it becomes our business to put ourselves in the best posture both for defence and offence. Common sense dictates that the best way to effect this is to collect our strength. In a collected state we can best repel a general attack; we can best make one, if circumstances warrant it; and we can move with greater expedition to disconcert any sudden push not immediately upon us, which the enemy are likely to make. It is needless to enlarge on a subject which your own judgment will enable you of itself to view in a just light.

"As to the designs of the enemy, appearances are so

intricate, fluctuating, and seemingly inconsistent, that it is difficult to form any certain conclusion from them. Either they do not understand themselves, and are very irresolute and fickle, or they very artfully manage matters to deceive us. I am rather inclined to suppose the former. This, however, I may say with tolerable certainty, that my ideas of their intending to operate to the southward, derive just support from such parts of their conduct lately as are most intelligible. We have a variety of concurring intelligence that they have lately drawn more troops into the Jerseys; that they have brought over a large number of wagons, and all the boats prepared for bridges, with several other particulars of less importance, all which denote a preparation to operate this way. Persons who have been among them assert confidently that they mean to attack us. But we are divided in sentiment as to the probability of that, or of their making a forced march to Philadelphia. If they act wisely, they will neither attack us in our present situation, strongly posted as we are, nor will they attempt to cross a river where they may certainly expect opposition in front, and leaving at the same time a formidable army in the rear. He should endeavor to draw us off from here, and fight us upon more equal ground. But after all, if he expects any timely reinforcements, upon what rational principle can he risk his own reputation and all the hopes of his cause, in an attempt with his present force, so extremely important and hazardous? Perhaps he only means to get every thing in readiness against the arrival of the reinforcements looked for, that he may immediately commence his operations. Things, however, will hardly bear this construction. We are told that in seventeen sail lately arrived from Europe, there were about two thousand raw recruits. This from deserters."

On the same day he wrote an official letter to Congress over Washington's signature. Alluding to advices of a probable attack by General Carleton, and to the probability that Gates had written to Congress, he remarked: "The shameful deficiencies in all our armies affords but too just grounds for disagreeable apprehensions. If the quotas assigned the different States are not immediately filled, we shall have every thing to fear. We shall never be able to resist their force, if the militia are to be relied on, nor do I know whether their aid, feeble and ineffectual as it is, is much to be expected. Can no expedient be devised to complete the regiments, and to arouse our unthinking countrymen from their lethargy? If there can, the situation of our affairs calls loudly for it."

The views as to the probable movements of the enemy and the measures to be taken, are more fully shown in a letter addressed by Hamilton to General Arnold, then stationed near the Delaware, in the name of the commander-in-chief, dated the seventeenth of the same month from the camp, still at Middlebrook:

"I have received your favor of the 16th inst. You mentioned a want of intelligence respecting my situation and that of the enemy. As to mine, the main body of our army are encamped at Middlebrook, and a considerable body under General Sullivan at Sourland Hills. The position here is very strong, and with a little labor which will be bestowed upon it, will be rendered a great deal more so. The passes in the mountains are for the most part extremely difficult, and cannot be attempted with any degree of propriety. Our right is our most accessible and weakest part, but two or three redoubts will render it as secure as could be wished. The enemy are strongly posted, having their right at Brunswick and their

left at Somerset. Besides being well fortified on the right they have the Raritan all along their front, and the Millstone on their left.

"In this situation, an attack upon them would not be warranted by a sufficient prospect of success, and might be attended with the most ruinous consequences. My design, therefore, is to collect all the force that can properly be drawn from other quarters to this post, so as to reduce the security of this army to the greatest possible certainty, and to be in a condition of embracing any fair opportunity that may offer, to make an advantageous attack upon them. In the mean time, I intend by light bodies of militia, countenanced by a few continental troops, to harass them, and weaken their numbers by continual skirmishes.

"I have ordered all the continental troops at Peekskill, except the number requisite for the security of the post, to hasten on to this army; and shall draw a part of General Sullivan's troops to reinforce our right, leaving the rest at and about Sourland Hills to gall the flank and rear of the enemy; with orders, in case of any movement towards us, to endeavor to form a junction, or if this should not be practicable, to fall briskly upon their rear or flank.

"The views of the enemy must be to destroy this army, and get possession of Philadelphia. I am, however, clearly of opinion that they will not move that way, till they have endeavored to give a severe blow to this army. The risk would be too great to attempt to cross a river, where they must expect to meet a formidable opposition in front, and would have such a force as ours in their rear. They might possibly be successful, but the probability would be infinitely against them. Should they be imprudent enough to do it, I shall keep close upon

their heels, and do every thing in my power to make the project fatal to them. But besides the argument for their intending, in the first place, a stroke at this army, drawn from the policy of the measure, every appearance coincides to confirm the opinion. Had they designed for the Delaware in the first instance, they would probably have made a secret, rapid march for it, and not halted as they have done, to awaken our attention, and give us time to prepare for obstructing them. Instead of that, they have only advanced to a position necessary to facilitate an attack upon our right, which is the part they have the greatest likelihood of injuring us in; and, added to this consideration, they have come out as light as possible, leaving all their baggage, provisions, boats and bridges at Brunswick; which plainly contradicts the idea of pushing for the Delaware.

"It is an happy circumstance that such an animation prevails among the people. I would wish to let it operate, and draw as many as possible together, which will be a great discouragement to the enemy, by showing that the popular spirit is at such a height; and at the same time will inspire the people themselves with confidence in their own strength, by discovering to every individual the zeal and spirit of his neighbors. But after they have been collected a few days, I would have the greater part of them dismissed as not being immediately wanted, desiring them to hold themselves in readiness for any sudden call, and concerting signals with them, at the appearance of which they are to fly to arms. I would have every means taken to engage a couple thousand of them for a month, or as much more as they can be induced to consent to. In this case they will be able to render essential service, both by an addition of strength for the present, and by lessening the fatigue and duty of the continental army,

which will tend to preserve them both in health and spirits.

"You will forward on all the continental troops by a safe route as fast as they arrive. But you need send over no more of the militia till further orders.

"I approve of your fortifying such places as you judge most likely to frustrate any attempt of the enemy to pass the river."

Three days after, Colonel Hamilton, over Washington's signature, wrote to General Putnam at Peekskill:

"General Howe has suddenly quitted his new post between Somerset and Brunswick, and has returned to his old situation. The whole design of his making his late movement this way, may possibly have been to induce us to draw off our troops from Peekskill—though I think it most probable that he was disappointed in his expectations of the manner in which we should act—and finding the people turn out with great spirit to strengthen the opposition we should give him, concluded it most prudent to relinquish his intentions, and resume his former position. But, lest the former should be the case, I have ordered Generals McDougall and Glover not to proceed. If they are at a distance from you, they are to halt where they are, and if they are near Peekskill they are to go back to it.

"General Schuyler writes to me, that from some intelligence he had lately received, there was reason to apprehend that General Burgoyne was making preparations for an immediate attack upon Ticonderoga, and on that account requests a reinforcement. But as the alarm may very likely prove false, until we have fuller evidence that such an event is about to take place, I do not think it advisable to lessen our force in this quarter, by sending them to where they may perhaps not be wanted.

"I would, however, have some disposition made to reinforce him with speed in case it should be necessary; and with this view I have to desire you will hold four of the strongest Massachusetts regiments under General Nixon, in constant readiness to march at the shortest notice They, however, are not to be sent off without an order from me for the purpose.

"You will have a sufficient number of vessels ready at your post to transport those troops, their baggage, &c., by water to Albany. They must be so disposed, as that they can be made use of and forwarded without the least delay. If these vessels are not to be had at and about Peekskill and Fishkill, you must immediately send to Albany to procure a supply of what may be deficient, and have them brought down to you. If you should receive any information that appears to you authentic, and makes it necessary to despatch the reinforcement, you can have the troops, baggage and provisions embarked, waiting only for my orders to sail; acquainting me immediately by express of the intelligence you may have received.

"It will be proper you should keep in view, that the enemy's motions must of necessity be in concert, and, if they operate to the northward, you must undoubtedly expect a visit to your post. Besides being continually prepared for this casualty, it will be highly useful to use every method of gaining intelligence from New York. The most effectual means of doing this, is hiring persons continually going in to, and coming out from the city."

A letter written by him, for Washington, to Generals McDougall and Glover was to the same effect.

Two days afterwards, he again wrote to Putnam in Washington's name: * * * "You have mistaken the orders I gave, according to which General McDougall should have halted at Pompton; because he was then at a

considerable distance from Peekskill, and was to have returned only in case he had been near that post. However, as matters have turned out, I am not sorry he is gone back: for it may now be concluded with tolerable certainty, that the enemy are about to quit the Jerseys and make some expedition by water. The North river may probably be the object, and if it is, General McDougall with his brigade cannot too soon return to reinforce you. Your utmost vigilance and industry are necessary to be in all respects prepared to give as much opposition as possible. Of all things, you cannot take too much care to secure the boats that they meet with no accident, and may be always ready on a sudden emergency, to transport this army across the river.

"The enemy abandoned Brunswick this morning, and seem to be pushing all their force for Amboy, which there is no doubt they will speedily evacuate also. Having gained intelligence yesterday of their hasty preparations for this purpose, I sent down last night and early this morning strong parties to fall upon their flanks and rear, who served to precipitate their retreat, but could not have a fair opportunity of doing them as much injury as I could wish. There have been several smart skirmishings, the effect not certainly known.

"The difficulties you mention in the removal of the stores from Fishkill to the places pointed out, ought to have had no weight. As it was a positive order of Congress, it ought to have been complied with, though attended with some inconveniencies; and the security of the magazines is of so much consequence, that the expense and trouble of removing them should not be put in competition with it. The present movements of the enemy make it necessary the order should be immediately executed. It will be proper to have sufficient guards

over them to prevent their being injured by the disaffected inhabitants; but the continental troops should be spared from this duty, as much as is consistent with prudence. There ought to be some of them at the most important and least secure places; but the others should be committed to the trustiest of the militia. It would be advisable to have small convenient works thrown up about them, which will make it less necessary to have large guards, and will discourage any attempt to destroy them."

On the twenty-eighth of June, Hamilton wrote to Robert R. Livingston this interesting letter: "Since my last, addressed to Mr. Morris, the enemy have been trying a second experiment to tempt us to an engagement, on equal terms of ground. Under the supposition of their intending to evacuate the Jerseys immediately, in order to keep up the idea of a pursuit, and to be in a posture to take advantage of any critical movement that might present itself, to give them a blow; the chief part of our army, after their retreat from Brunswick, was marched down to Quibbletown, and parties detached thence further towards the enemy. Finding this disposition take place, and expecting that, elated by what has passed, we might be willing to enter upon a general engagement, which is Howe's only hope, he came out with his whole army from Amboy, only on Thursday morning, and made a forced march towards our left, with design, if possible, to cut off some of our detachments, particularly one under Lord Stirling; and probably, if we were not expeditious in regaining the heights, to get there before us by rapidly entering the passes on our left. Lord Stirling's party was near being surrounded, but after a smart skirmish with the enemy's main body, made their retreat good to Westfield, and ascended the pass of the mountains back of the

Scotch plains. The other parties, after skirmishing on their flanks, came off to join the main body and take possession of the heights. The enemy continued their march towards our left as far as Westfield, and there halted. In the mean time, it was judged prudent to return with the army to the mountains, lest it should be their intention to get into them, and force us to fight them on their own terms. They remained at Westfield till the next day, and perceiving their views disappointed, have again returned to Amboy, plundering and burning as usual. We had parties hanging about them on their return; but they were so much on their guard, no favorable opportunity could be found of giving them any material annoyance. Their loss we cannot ascertain; and our own in men is inconsiderable, though we have as yet received no returns of the missing. I have no doubt they have lost more men than we, but unfortunately, I won't say from what cause, they got three field-pieces from us which will give them room for vaporing, and embellish their excursion in the eyes of those who make every trifle a matter of importance. It is not unlikely they will soon be out of the Jerseys; but where they will go to next is mere matter of conjecture, for, as you observe, their conduct is so eccentric, as to leave no certain grounds on which to form a judgment of their intentions. I know the comments that some people will make on our Fabian conduct. It will be imputed either to cowardice or to weakness. But the more discerning, I trust, will not find it difficult to conceive, that it proceeds from the truest policy, and is an argument neither of the one nor the other.

"The liberties of America are an infinite stake. We should not play a desperate game for it or put it upon the issue of a single cast of the die. The loss of one general engagement may effectually ruin us, and it would certain-

ly be folly to hazard it, unless our resources for keeping up an army were at an end, and some decisive blow was absolutely necessary; or unless, our strength was so great as to give certainty of success. Neither is the case. America can, in all probability, maintain its army for years; and our numbers, though such as would give a reasonable hope of success, are not such as should make us entirely sanguine. A third consideration, did it exist, might make it expedient to risk such an event—the prospect of very great reinforcements to the enemy; but every appearance contradicts this, and affords all reason to believe they will get very inconsiderable accessions of strength this campaign. All the European maritime powers are interested for the defeat of the British arms in America, and will never assist them. A small part of Germany is disposed to make a market of its troops, and even this seems not over fond of being drained any farther: many springs may be put in motion even to put a stop to this. The king of Prussia may, perhaps, without much difficulty, be engaged to espouse views unfriendly to the court of Britain, and a nod of his would be sufficient to prevent all future German succors. He, as well as most other powers of Europe, feels the necessity of commerce and a large maritime force, to be generally respectable. His situation till lately has been unfavorable to this; but the reduction of Poland and the acquisition of Dantzig in the Baltic, have put it very much in his power to pursue commercial schemes and may tempt him to be propitious to American independence. Russian assistance is still infinitely more precarious; for besides that it cannot be the true interest of that ambitious empire to put its troops to sale, it is at present embroiled with the Turks, and will want all its men to employ in its own wars. England herself, from the nature of her policy, can fur-

nish few soldiers, and even those few can ill be spared, to come to America in the present hostile appearance of affairs in Europe. On whatever side it is considered, no great reinforcements are to be expected to the British army in America. It is, therefore, Howe's business to make the most of his present strength; and as he is not numerous enough to conquer and garrison as he goes, his only hope lies in fighting us, and giving a general defeat at one blow.

"On our part, we are continually strengthening our political springs in Europe, and may every day look for more effectual aids than we have yet received. Our own army is continually growing stronger in men, arms and discipline; we shall soon have an important addition of artillery, now on its way to join us. We can maintain our present numbers good, at least by enlistments, while the enemy must dwindle away; and at the end of the summer the disparity between us will be infinitely great, and facilitate any exertions that may be made to settle the business with them. Their affairs will be growing worse, ours better; so that delay will ruin them. It will serve to perplex and fret them, and precipitate them into measures that we can turn to good account. Our business, then, is to avoid a general engagement, and waste the enemy by constantly goading their sides in a desultory, teasing way. In the mean time, it is painful to leave a part of our inhabitants a prey to their depredations; and it is wounding to the feelings of a soldier, to see an enemy parading before him and daring him to fight, which he is obliged to decline. But a part must be sacrificed to the whole, and passion must give way to reason. You will be sensible that it will not be advisable to publish the sentiments contained in this letter as coming from me; because this will make the enemy more fully acquainted with

our views; but it might not be amiss to have them circulated as those which ought to govern the conduct of the army, in order to prepare the minds of the people for what may happen, and take off the disagreeable impressions our caution may make."

The hoped-for interposition of Frederick the Great to prevent the traffic in German troops was confirmed by his subsequent conduct. He publicly condemned this nefarious trade in the lives of men, and forbade the march of these mercenaries through his dominions.

Mirabeau also came to the rescue of humanity. In an address entitled a "Counsel to the Hessians and other people of Germany sold by their sovereigns to England," he appealed with his wonted eloquence to the pride of the German people, denounced the policy of their rulers, and awakened their sympathies to the cause of America. "Ye people, betrayed, debased and sold, you should blush at your errors! Let the cover fall from your eyes, quit the soil that is stained with despotism. Cross the seas; flee to America; but embrace your brothers, defend this generous people against the haughty rapacity of their persecutors; share their good fortune; multiply their strength; aid them by your industry; appropriate to yourselves their riches while increasing them. Such is the end of society, such is the duty of man, whom nature has made to love his neighbors, and not to butcher them.

"Learn from the Americans the art of being free, of being happy, of turning social institutions to the profit of each member of society. Forget, in the capacious asylum which they open to suffering humanity, the infatuation of which you were the participators and the victims. Understand what is true greatness, true glory and true happiness."

To this appeal the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel dared

an answer, which drew from the gifted Frenchman a withering reply.

Though diminished, these subsidies of men continued to the end of the Revolution, torn from the bosoms of their families and kidnapped on the public highways. The youth, the student, the poet was not safe in the land of his birth. The return of America to this grievous wrong has been, as Hamilton early proffered, "to receive them as brethren and make them sharers with us in all the advantages we were struggling for."*

On the sixth of July he again wrote to Gouverneur Morris: "If I recollect how far my last went, it did not announce the return of the enemy from Westfield to Amboy, nor their evacuation of that place since. After resting and refreshing themselves a night, they decamped the following day, and proceeded to Amboy, from which place they went to Staten Island as expeditiously as they could, where they still remain.

"The news from the northward wore so serious a face that our generals thought the enemy were about to operate in earnest against our posts in that quarter; and as, supposing this the case, General Howe might certainly be expected to co-operate by way of the North river, it was judged necessary to move the main body of the army from Middlebrook to Morristown; to advance a division under General Sullivan to Pompton, and another under General Parsons as far as Peekskill. A brigade at that post, under General Nixon, was ordered, so soon as Parsons' division arrived near its destination, to proceed immediately as a reinforcement to the northern army. This disposition is deemed advantageous to prevent the success of a *coup de main* on the Highland passes, and not inconsistent with a proper attention to Philadelphia, should the

* Hamilton's Works, ii. 8. Appendix E.

northern alarm prove nothing more than a diversion, and Howe return to the charge that way.

"I am loath to risk a conjecture about Mr. Howe. He is such an unintelligible gentleman, that no rule of interpretation can possibly be found out by which to unravel his designs. If he acted like a man of sense, he would wait quietly on Staten Island, and there concentrate all his forces. He would draw round him all the men that could be spared from Canada, and all that are now at Rhode Island. With these, and the reinforcements he may receive from Europe, he would make a point of forcing us, by some means or other, to an action. In this his only hope lies. If he could defeat our army and improve the moment of success, he would go very near effecting his purpose; but, let him go to the northward or to the southward, every new post he takes weakens his main body, and makes it the more liable to be ruined by our collective strength. Any object short of our army is a bad one; and that plan is the worst, where, by a division of his forces he runs the hazard, in case of an accident either way, of having his whole scheme overturned.

"We have different accounts of the present situation of his army. Some tell us that the whole is now encamped on Staten Island; others, that the greater part of the Hessians are on board the ships. By some sailors who came from them yesterday, we are told that the ships are taking in water and provisions for two months, and that conveniences for transporting horses are fitting up in them. All this is rather vague, and may or may not be true. Their flourishes in the Jerseys, I believe, cannot have cost them less than six or seven hundred men. We have not lost above a hundred. This is the best way of ruining them without risking any thing. Our present situation is embarrassing. Their ships give them a vast advantage,

and we shall probably be much puzzled when they begin their operations again. We shall, however, act cautiously, and do the best we can. We are anxiously waiting for northern intelligence. Please forward the enclosed to General Schuyler per first opportunity."

A few days previous he had written to Governor Trumbull, over Washington's signature, as to the disposition of the public arms, and the movements of the enemy. He stated, orders were given to four of the strongest Massachusetts regiments to relieve Ticonderoga, and to Clinton, "without loss of time to call out a respectable body of the New York militia to join General Putnam. I have," he added, "the fullest confidence that you will do every thing you can to second my endeavors, by forwarding as fast as possible the remaining troops of your State, or whatever else may be in your power. Our greatest exertions will be requisite to counteract the enemy in their first attempts, on which their success chiefly depends." In a letter to Governor Rutledge over Washington's signature, he gave a similar view of the purposes of the British, and acknowledged the reasons assigned for declining the attempt on St. Augustine previously proposed, to be "entirely solid and satisfactory."

These letters are not only important in themselves, but also to show the systematic care observed throughout the whole of Hamilton's participation in public affairs to diffuse correct information of public measures.

Learning the preparations of Howe to embark, Colonel Hamilton again wrote over Washington's signature to Governor Trumbull: "I have thought it my duty to communicate to you the information I have received, that in case any thing should be meditated against the eastern States you may not be taken by surprise, and may have warning to put matters in the best situation you can to

give them a proper reception. On my part no vigilance nor exertion shall be wanting to ascertain their intentions and give effectual assistance wherever they may direct their efforts." He expressed surprise as to the discontents of the eastern States in respect to the supply of arms, which they had received "in much greater proportion than the other States."

A scene of much interest was now opening to the view on the northern frontier of New York where the influences of the previous campaign were most unhappy.

While "the levies" in the other colonies had submitted to the assumed powers of the Continental Congress, those of Connecticut refused to sign the articles of war it had established. Wooster, who was present at the taking of Louisburg, and had commanded a regiment of Connecticut militia during the war with France, was, in seventy-five, promoted, with the rank of major-general, to the command of all the troops raised by that colony. On the organization of an army by Congress, he was commissioned by them as brigadier-general. The spirit of the Connecticut soldiers alarmed Schuyler. He was compelled to call upon Wooster to state on what ground he stood, that of a provincial or a continental officer. Wooster met the question in a proper spirit, and avowed his purpose to be governed by the articles of war. His decision, felt by himself to have involved a sacrifice of rank, was not in consonance with the temper of his men.

This was seriously felt by Montgomery and by Schuyler.

Early in September, seventy-five, the latter, on his incursion into Canada, proceeded, though ill with the gout, from the Isle aux Noix along the Sorel to the vicinity of St. Johns, where a cannonade from its fort was opened upon him. A short distance farther on, having

landed his troops, he attacked a party of tories and Indians, losing a few men. The night was passed near the fort, from which infrequent shells broke near him with trifling injury. Advices of the increased strength of this work determined a council of officers to retire to the Isle aux Noix until reinforcements came up.*

These arriving, the investment of St. Johns was resumed. At the moment Schuyler was about again to lead on his troops, he was again taken seriously ill and compelled to confide the conduct of the expedition to the brave Irishman, Montgomery, his second in command. Schuyler's bed was placed in a covered batteau and he returned to Ticonderoga to forward aid. Montgomery moved on to the investment, which proceeded slowly, until Colonel Lamb, a leader, as has been seen, in the early popular commotions of New York, now an intrepid soldier, arrived with a small train of artillery. St. Johns ultimately surrendered. During the siege, a letter from Montgomery to Schuyler shows the insubordination of a part of his command. "Were I not afraid the example would be too generally followed, and that the public service might suffer, I would not stay an hour at the head of troops whose operations I cannot direct."

Schuyler also complained of "the want of subordination" and inattention to his orders, and of the impatience to return home.

Washington felt the same difficulties. "The Connecticut troops," he wrote to Reed from Cambridge, "will not be prevailed upon to stay longer than their term, saving those who have enlisted for the next campaign, and are mostly on furlough; and such a mercenary spirit pervades the whole that I should not be surprised at any disaster that may happen." They "are exceedingly turbu-

* Irving's Washington, ii. 59.

lent and even mutinous," Montgomery writes the day after the capture of Montreal. "I am weary of power, and totally want that patience and temper so requisite for such a command. I wish some method could be fallen upon of engaging *gentlemen* to serve. A point of honor and more knowledge of the world to be found in that class of men, would greatly reform discipline, and render the troops much more tractable." The discontent had extended to those of New York.

The repulse at Quebec and the disasters that followed increased this spirit, which was exhibited more openly when, by the fall of Montgomery, the command devolved upon Wooster.

The generous warmth of Schuyler gave new cause of dissatisfaction. A party of an hundred persons, ice-bound, starving, applied to him for aid. Schuyler ordered three captains of Wooster's men "to attempt a relief to the unhappy sufferers." Their reluctant frivolous excuses drew from him a public rebuke which was not forgotten.*

Some time after, Schuyler, seeing the full extent of the alienation, wrote to Washington: "I have already informed you of the disagreeable situation I have been in during the campaign; but I would waive that, were it not that it has chiefly arisen from prejudice and jealousy; for I could point out particular persons of rank in the army, who have frequently declared that the general commanding in this quarter, ought to be of the colony from whence the majority of the troops came. But it is not from opinions or principles of individuals that I have drawn the following conclusion, *that troops from the colony of Connecticut will not bear with a general from another colony;* it is from the daily and common conversation of all ranks of people from that colony, both in and out of the army."

* Irving's Washington, ii. 55.

He laments it as "an unbecoming jealousy," and adds, "although I frankly avow that I feel a resentment, yet I shall continue to sacrifice it to a nobler object—the weal of that country in which I have drawn the breath of life, resolved ever to seek with unwearied assiduity for opportunities to fulfil my duty to it."

This prejudice did not subside. The desire to serve under Wooster grew, yet Washington had been early apprised that he was "not of such activity as to press through the difficulties with which the service" in which he was employed, "was environed."

The dangers of a retreat demanded an officer of greater energy. Schuyler censured—Wooster was offended. The troops of New England partook of his feelings, and along the frontier, threatened with all the ravages of an invasion, alarms were followed by clamors, and clamors by accusations. The tories felt the importance of driving from the command a man of Schuyler's vigor and resource. Charges were circulated, not only against his military conduct, but against his integrity. Committees were raised and resolves published of grossest imputation. Schuyler demanded "an immediate inquiry" into his conduct. "Your excellency will therefore please," he wrote to Washington, "to order a court of inquiry the soonest possible, for I cannot sit easy under such an infamous imputation. It is peculiarly hard, that at the very time that assassins and incendiaries are employed to take away my life and property, as being an active friend to my country; at the very time when I had taken measures and given orders, some of which are actually executed, to secure the tories and to send them down to your excellency, a set of pretended whigs (for such they are that have propagated these diabolical tales) should proclaim me through all America a traitor to my country." Wash-

ington declared his "disbelief, detestation and abhorrence" of these calumnies, viewing them as designed "to excite disorder and confusion."

An immediate remedy was necessary. Commissioners* were sent by Congress to the northern line. Their dispatch from Montreal describes the army as "broken and disheartened," "without discipline" and without supplies. "General Wooster is, in our opinion, totally unfit to command your army and conduct the war. His stay is unnecessary and even prejudicial to our affairs. We would therefore advise his recall." Congress ordered Washington to call him to New York. Wooster demanded an inquiry, which was favorable to him. He then resigned his continental command, and was appointed first major-general of the Connecticut militia.

To meet the great emergency, six thousand militia—seven-eighths from New England, the residue from New York, were ordered to reinforce the northern army; and Washington was directed to order Gates to the command in Canada.† "His great ability and virtue," Richard Henry Lee writes to Washington, "will be absolutely necessary to restore things there, and his recommendations will always be readily complied with. You will find that great powers are given to the commander in that distant department." "We have ordered you," John Adams wrote to him, "to the post of honor, and made you dictator in Canada for six months."‡ "The affairs of Canada," Gerry, also a delegate from Massachusetts, remarked to him, "have evidently been suffering for the want of an experienced officer to take the command."

Gates proceeded to Albany, where Schuyler had returned, being received by the people with their accus-

* Chase and Carrol. † June 17, 1776.

‡ Force's American Archives, June 18–28, 1775.

tomed affection. He immediately sought an interview with Gates, and, as the post of first importance within his own command, tendered him the charge of Ticonderoga.

Gates, unwilling to serve in a subordinate capacity, claimed the command of the northern department. The question was referred to Congress. A resolution was immediately passed that Gates be "informed that it was their intention to give him the command of the troops whilst in Canada, but that they had no design to vest him with a superior command to General Schuyler, whilst the troops should be on this side Canada."

The eastern States opposed this resolution, and had Rhode Island been present, would have prevailed in favor of Gates.* He had repaired to Ticonderoga, and thence, with wounded pride, wrote to Samuel Adams: "I desire, if Chace is returned to Congress, he may know how much I have been deceived and disappointed in being removed from a place where I might have done the public service, and fixed in a situation where it is exceedingly doubtful if it will be in my power to be more than a wretched spectator of a ruined army."

Overlooking what had passed, Schuyler declared to Gates his desire to cultivate "mutual harmony."

Soon after Gates had taken the command, the troops stationed at Crown Point were withdrawn. As his appointment had been made with a full purpose to recover the ground lost early in the year, Washington condemned this retrograde movement, as a relinquishment of the lakes would open an "uninterrupted passage into three of the New England governments." Gates gave a sharp reply: "I must now take the liberty to animadvert a little upon the unprecedented behavior of the members of your council to their compeers in this department. They, sir,

* Roger Sherman to Trumbull, May 26, 1777.

having every ample supply at hand, make no allowance for the misfortunes and wants of this army, nor for the delay and difficulty that attend the procuring every thing necessary here. Had we a healthy army, four times the number of the enemy, our magazines full, our artillery complete, stores of every kind in profuse abundance, with vast and populous towns and country close at hand to supply our wants, your Excellency would hear no complaints from this army; and the members of your council, our brethren and compeers, would have as little reason then, as they have now, to censure the conduct of those who are in nothing inferior to themselves."

The tone of this letter is the more remarkable, as the command had been conferred upon Gates with Washington's warm approval. He replied: "In answer to those parts of your letter in which you so highly resent the conduct of the general officers here, I would observe, sir, that you are under a mistake when you suppose a council of officers had sat upon those, who composed the board at Crown Point." "No event of which I have been informed for a long time, produced a more general chagrin and consternation. But yet there was no council called upon the occasion, nor court of inquiry, nor court martial, as has been suspected by some. I will not take up more time upon the subject, nor make it a matter of further discussion, not doubting but those who determined that the post ought to be abandoned, conceived it would promote the interest of the great cause we are engaged in. By the bye, I wish your description perfectly corresponded with the circumstances of this army."

His knowledge of a party formed in his favor in Congress doubtless had encouraged Gates to insubordination. At the time of this correspondence he received another letter from Gerry, written at Hartford: "We want very

much to see you in the sole command in the northern department, but hope that you will not relinquish your station until a favorable opportunity shall effect it."

In this post he remained until ordered by Schuyler to hasten with a body of troops to the aid of Washington at the close of the year.

To avail himself of his services in a position in which he could be most useful, Washington urged him soon after, and Congress requested him, to resume the office of adjutant-general, retaining his rank and pay. He declined it with displeasure, and was ordered again to Ticonderoga.* His letters to Washington were still peevish, and drew from him a mild rebuke.

Gates was not to be satisfied, and Congress felt themselves compelled to define precisely the extent of the northern department. They declared "that Albany, Ticonderoga, Fort Stanwix and their dependencies be henceforward considered" as that department, and ordered Schuyler to take the command. This vote was passed late in May. Gates decided to appeal to them in person, and on the eighteenth of June he was at the door of that body, asking admittance on the plea of communicating information.

At the instance of Roger Sherman, an influential member from Connecticut, he was received into their presence.

After some desultory statements of little moment, vaunting his merits in relinquishing a life of ease to enter the field in behalf of the liberty of America, and his exertions in its defence, Gates opened his grief. He had been superseded in a command to which he had been so recently appointed without cause, and without opportunity of vindication. His ire rose. Reproaches of Congress

* March 25, 1777.

followed, even to the inculpation of a delegate from New York—a friend of Schuyler—Duane called upon the president to interpose. A motion that he withdraw was seconded, but was opposed by some of the eastern delegates.

In the midst of a warm discussion, Gates, in high temper, left the House. A sense of their own dignity at last prevailed. It was resolved he should not be again admitted, that a written representation from him be made. Gates was soon after ordered to repair to head-quarters.

During this scene of folly, events at the northward were hastening to an issue. Ere the public pulse had calmed after the celebration in the principal towns, "with much pomp and illuminations," of the first anniversary of American Independence, a great reverse took place.

The results of the campaign of the preceding year, though finally disastrous to the Americans, had not met the expectations of the English public, unused to defeat, and taught to believe that a junction of their two armies from opposite points would terminate the contest. The command of the active column of the force to operate from Canada was intrusted to Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, who now resolved to achieve his fame. With this view he had repaired to England during the winter, submitted his plans to the war office, and aided by high family influence to which his claim was not legitimate,* obtained all he asked of troops and muniments of war.

From the gay saloons of London he returned to Quebec early in the spring, and pressed on with ardor the preparations for the campaign. Leaving behind him under Carleton for the protection of Canada a mixed body of three thousand men, on the twenty-first of June, two

* "He was a natural son of Lord Bingley, high in confidence."—*Lossing's Pictorial Field Book*, i. 37.

days after Gates's scene with Congress, he took post with his well appointed army on the western bank of Lake Champlain. Hence he proceeded to the Boquet near Crown Point. His regular force consisted of nearly seven thousand men, exclusive of the artillerists, British and German. The former under Major-general Philips of the artillery, Brigadiers Fraser, Hamilton and Powell, the latter commanded by Major-general the Baron Riedesel of Brunswick, and Brigadiers Gall and Specht. A heavy train of artillery was the lieutenant-general's chief reliance, destined to become a principal cause of his mishaps. A few Canadians and a crowd of painted Indians, allured by a war feast, by presents and hope of spoils, were his auxiliaries. These he addressed, enjoining them to abstain from bloodshed, when not opposed in arms—to hold sacred the aged and young—promising reward for prisoners, but punishment for scalps.

An aged Iroquois assured him his commands would be obeyed. "We have been tried and tempted by the Bostonians,* but we have loved our father, and our hatchets have been sharpened on our affections." A detachment of rangers and a few Indians under Colonel St. Leger were ordered to penetrate by Oswego to the Mohawk, capture and hold Fort Schuyler at the head of its boat navigation, and thence, reinforced by Sir John Johnson with his numerous adherents, to join Burgoyne with the main body, when arrived at Albany.

Burgoyne, whose pride of pen was a besetting vanity, issued a manifesto, suasive to those who should renounce their erring disloyalty, menacing the contumacious with the horrors of civilized and savage warfare. Neither his pomp of style nor his array of arms affected the hardy borderers, confiding in their mountains and morasses, their

* Alluding to the mission of the previous year by Congress.

wooded defiles and unerring rifles for their protection. Affright was soon to take place of this confidence.

Ticonderoga was directly in his path. Here was St. Clair, a native of Scotland, who had served under Wolfe, behaved well at Trenton and Princeton, and was recently raised to the rank of major-general, with a garrison of Americans consisting of thirty-three hundred men, of whom one-third were unfit for duty, "many of them mere boys," "naked and ill armed, not above one bayonet to every tenth man." *

Yet this post had been the care of the States. Its capture had been hailed with rapturous joy as among the earliest triumphs of the revolution. Prodigies of labor had been applied to give it strength. It was the barred door to Canada, and must be defended at every hazard.

Hither, on tidings of Burgoyne's advance, Schuyler instantly repaired. Relying too much upon its artificial strength, and overlooking its disadvantage of position, he returned to Fort George, forwarded provisions and additional workmen from the upper shores of the Hudson, hoping a repulse if it were attacked, but believing the enemy, deterred from the attempt, would move upon the eastern States. That they would endeavor, without taking this fort, to penetrate to Albany, he thought almost "impossible."

But this important post required a numerous garrison to man it. That of St. Clair was wholly inadequate. Only twenty days had elapsed since he took the command. He saw his danger. "Should the enemy invest and blockade us, we are infallibly ruined. * * * Nor do I see that a retreat will in any shape be practicable." It was entirely commanded by a precipitous height which, while extending their lines of investment, was scaled by

* Letter of St. Clair, July 9, at Manchester.

the British. The neglect to fortify this eminence is the more remarkable, as, in the preceding year when Gates was in command, Arnold and Wayne had clambered to its top, pronounced it accessible, and communicated to him the fact.* Though this was known to Gates, he took no measures to occupy it with a small battery, but wrote to Congress that "the works were in the best order, the boom and bridge of communication finished, and every *necessary preparation for defence made.*"

The case was now desperate. St. Clair, confirmed in his opinion by a council of officers, resolved to evacuate a place no longer tenable. An immediate retreat ere break of day was ordered. On the sixth of July, the water force with the artillery and stores proceeded to Skenesborough, now Whitehall, and were captured. Thither also St. Clair was about to march, but anticipated by the enemy, he was compelled to abandon his purpose, and he retreated by a circuitous route, in search of provisions, of six days' march through Vermont to Fort Edward, his rear guard retarded by a brisk engagement.

Schuyler, astounded at this unexpected reverse, wrote in the month of July to Washington from Fort Edward. "I am here at the head of a handful of men, not above fifteen hundred, without provisions, little ammunition, not above five rounds to a man, having neither ball nor lead to make any; the country in the deepest consternation, no carriages to move the stores from Lake George, which I expect every moment to learn is attacked. And what adds to my distress is, that a report prevails that I had given orders for the evacuation of Ticonderoga, whereas not the most distant hint of such an intention can be drawn from any of my letters to General St. Clair or any other person whatever. What could induce the general

* Trumbull's Autobiography, p. 31, 32.

officers to a step that has ruined our affairs in this quarter, God only knows."

On receiving advices of these events, Colonel Hamilton, in the name of Washington, wrote from head-quarters at Pompton to Putnam:

"In consequence of the disagreeable event which has taken place in the evacuation of Ticonderoga and Fort Independence, though our situation does not make it prudent to send on any considerable reinforcements immediately, besides those already gone, yet it is necessary we should be preparing to throw them in when it can be more safely done, and the true state of affairs in that quarter is more clearly unfolded. I have therefore to desire you will order General Glover to hold his brigade in constant readiness to embark at a moment's warning; and, at the same time, that you will collect at your post, as fast as possible, a sufficient number of vessels to transport them with their baggage, tents, &c., to Albany.

"You will also send forward immediately some active, trusty officer, to meet such detachments as may be coming on, belonging to the regiments that compose General Nixon's brigade, with orders if he meets them where they can be sent by a short route, and in an expeditious manner to join their corps, to hasten them on accordingly, without letting them come to Peekskill. But such as he may find so far advanced towards it as to render it more conducive to despatch, to come on and to go thence by water, he is to make them continue their march with all speed, and on their arrival with you, you are without the least loss of time to forward them to their regiments.

"I mean that you should act in this in the manner best calculated, according to circumstances, to answer the end of their joining the corps they belong to with the greatest expedition possible.

"I have determined that ten field-pieces, with the necessary apparatus, shall be sent on from your post to General Schuyler. General Knox will send up an officer with particular directions about them. You will be pleased to give every assistance requisite to the forwarding them with dispatch.

"I have just received intelligence that General Howe's army is nearly all embarked. They will certainly proceed very soon to the place of their destination. Our misfortune to the northward makes it of the last importance you should take every precaution to avoid one at your post, which could not fail to produce consequences almost, if not entirely, irremediable. As a very material step towards this, I would recommend to you to contract the points of defence, and secure your flanks and rear as much as possible, by stopping up all roads by which you are accessible in any part, that are not absolutely necessary to keep open your communication with the country from whence you draw your supplies. Attend particularly to the cross-roads leading from the valley on the right of the great road leading from Peekskill to Fishkill into that road, and do not content yourself with slight impediments easily removed; but endeavor to make them effectual. Be attentive also to the roads that lead from Croton by the way of Danbury or elsewhere towards Fishkill. The fewer the avenues of approach to you, the more certain the judgment you can form of the enemy's intentions and operations, the more easily you can adapt your measures to them, and the greater will be your force at the place of attack."

Colonel Hamilton also wrote to Schuyler in the name of Washington, who was pressing on to the Highlands, informing him of the supplies sent forward, commenting with much solicitude on the fate of St. Clair, of whom no

advices had been received, and urging him, as difficulties grew, to greater efforts. He also requested Congress to order Arnold to join Schuyler. "I need not enlarge," he wrote, "upon the well known activity, conduct and bravery of General Arnold. The proofs he has given of all three have gained him the confidence of the public and of the army, the eastern troops in particular."

This soldier, whose story, had he possessed virtue equal to his genius and his courage, would have filled some of the most brilliant pages in the history of the revolution, had been only requited for his great services by greater wrongs.

His gallantry in the capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, his expedition through the wilderness to Quebec, his conduct and wound in its assault, his romantic resource and daring on Lake George, seemed to have made no impression upon Congress.

In the first appointments of major-generals after these achievements, five officers, juniors in rank, one only an officer of militia, were elevated to that station. Arnold was unnoticed. Washington felt the undeserved injury, and wrote him a soothing letter, promising his interposition. It failed of success, for the alleged reason, that each State claimed the number of general officers proportioned to the troops it furnished, and Connecticut having two, there was no vacancy.*

This was a policy early condemned by the delegates from the southern States, who avowed and acted upon the principle of removing the "attachment of the officers

* W. to R. H. Lee: "I am anxious to know whether General Arnold's non-promotion was owing to accident or design, and the cause of it. Surely a more active, a more spirited, and sensible officer, fills no department in your army. It is not to be presumed (being the oldest brigadier) that he will continue in the service under such a slight."

and men to their respective colonies," and making "them look up to the continent at large for their support or promotion." *

In this policy Washington concurred. I confess," he wrote to Arnold, "this is a strange mode of reasoning, but it may show you, that the promotion which was due to your seniority, was not overlooked for want of merit."

On his way to Congress to obtain redress, the incursion to Danbury gave him another opportunity to exhibit his prowess. Congress now bestowed upon him the commission he claimed, but left him, in its date, below the five generals who had been promoted before him. Again Washington interposed, offering him a command upon the Hudson as a special mark of confidence. This he declined, and proceeding to Philadelphia demanded an investigation into his conduct. The result was a declaration by the Board of War that he had been "cruelly and groundlessly aspersed." Their report was approved, but his rank was not restored. An unpleasant question of his accounts arose, and while they were yet unsettled, he was called by Washington to the aid of Schuyler. "Waiving," as Washington stated, "for the present all disputes about rank," he proceeded instantly on his way.

On the twenty-second of July Schuyler was told: "From your accounts, he" (Burgoyne) "appears to be pursuing that line of conduct, which of all others is most favorable to us; *I mean acting in detachment.* This conduct will certainly give room for enterprise on our part, and expose his parties to great hazard. *Could we be so happy, as to cut one of them off,* supposing it should not exceed four, five, or six hundred men, it would inspirit the people, and do away much of their present anxiety. In such an event, they would lose sight of past misfortunes, and,

* Letter of Sam. Ward, Nov. 21, 1775.

urged at the same time by a regard for their own security, they would fly to arms and afford every aid in their power."

On the same day Colonel Hamilton wrote him in Washington's name: "Since mine of this date I have come to a resolution to send you a further reinforcement, in order the more effectually to enable you to give the enemy a seasonable check, and have accordingly directed General Putnam immediately to forward General Glover's brigade to you." He added that every tent that could possibly be spared would be sent. "You may depend upon having every supply you want which it is by any means in my power to afford."

At the same time, Hamilton wrote to Gouverneur Morris, who had recently visited Fort Edward. To this post great importance had been attached during the French war. It was built of logs and earth, with a deep fosse, at the junction of a creek flowing into the Hudson.

"Your favor of the eighteenth from Saratoga, reached me yesterday. Your pronouncing Fort Edward among the other forts, indefensible, surprised me a little, as it is entirely contrary to the representations of several gentlemen of judgment who have had an opportunity of seeing and considering its situation; by whom we have been taught to believe that it would be an excellent post, at least for checking and retarding Burgoyne's progress. I agree with you that our principal strength in the quarter you are, will be in the forests and natural strength of the country, and in the want of forage, provisions, carriages, etc., in which the enemy may easily be thrown by taking away what there are of those articles, which, you observe, have never been in great abundance.

I am doubtful whether Burgoyne will attempt to pene-

trate far, and whether he will not content himself with harassing our back settlements by parties assisted by the savages, who, it is to be feared, will pretty generally be tempted, by the enemy's late successes, to confederate in hostilities against us.

"This doubt arises from some appearances that indicate a southern movement of General Howe's army, which, if it should really happen, will certainly be a barrier against any further impressions of Burgoyne; for it cannot be supposed he would be rash enough to plunge into the bosom of the country without an expectation of being met by General Howe. Things must prove very adverse to us indeed, should he make such an attempt and *not be ruined by it.* I confess, however, that the appearances I allude to do not carry a full evidence in my mind; because they are opposed by others of a contradictory kind; and because I cannot conceive upon what principle of common sense or military propriety, Howe can be running away from Burgoyne to the southward.

"It is much to be wished he may, even though it should give him the possession of Philadelphia, which by our remoteness from it may very well happen. In this case, we may not only, if we think proper, retaliate by *aiming a stroke at New York,* but we may come upon him with the greatest part of our collective force to act against that part which is under him. We shall then be certain that Burgoyne cannot proceed, and that a small force of continental troops will be sufficient for that partisan war which he must carry on the rest of the campaign.

"A small force will also be sufficient to garrison the posts in the Highlands, and prevent any danger there; so that we shall be able to bring nearly the whole of the continental army against Mr. Howe. The advantages of this are obvious. Should he be satisfied with the splendor

of his acquisitions, and shut himself up in Philadelphia, we can ruin him by confinement. Should he leave a garrison there and go forward, we can either fall upon that or his main body, diminished as it will be by such a measure, with our whole force. There will, however, be many disagreeable consequences attending such an event, amongst which the foremost is, *the depreciation of our currency*, which, from the importance in which Philadelphia is held, cannot fail to ensue."

CHAPTER IX.

Schuyler now made the dispositions best adapted to the policy of his situation. He immediately advanced Nixon's brigade just arrived, supported by militia, to Fort Anne, a small work near the head of Wood Creek to obstruct its passage and that of the road to Fort Edward. Another party of militia he stationed near Fort George, incomplete and indefensible, situate upon an elevation sloping to the lake of that name, to cover the retreat of the garrison. These timely precautions proved of the utmost moment.

He now wrote to the president of Massachusetts Bay: "Should it be asked what line of conduct I mean to hold amidst such a variety of difficulties and distress, I would answer—to dispute every inch of ground with General Burgoyne, and retard his descent into the country as long as possible, without the least hope of being able to prevent it ultimately, unless reinforced by General Washingon or by a respectable body of militia."

On the same day Hamilton wrote to him in behalf of Washington in a tone of provident confidence from the head-quarters at Ramapaugh:

"I am sorry that you have not yet been joined by a larger number of militia, and that it has been found

necessary to dismiss a part even of those that have come to your assistance, though their presence is, at this time, so urgently wanted. I am in hopes, however, that your situation will soon be more respectable, as I cannot but think the Eastern States who are so intimately concerned in the matter, will exert themselves to throw in effectual succors to enable you to check the progress of the enemy, and repel a danger with which they are so immediately threatened. I informed you in a letter of the 23d that I had ordered a further reinforcement in General Glover's brigade to be dispatched to you. This is all the aid in continental troops that I can possibly afford you in the present state of affairs, which you will be sensible is the case if you will endeavor to form an idea of my strength from a consideration of that of the two brigades which have been sent to reinforce you. You may make a tolerably exact estimate from them of the force I have to oppose the enemy's main army; and you will plainly perceive that I cannot with the least propriety render it less, however strong my inclinations to put you upon the footing you desire.

"You seem to apprehend that the artillery sent up to you will be useless from a want of a sufficient number of hands to manage them; but I see no reason to imagine this will be the case, as by your last return, including non-commissioned officers, you will have nearly twelve men to each piece, which are as many as we make use of here, and are sufficient for the purpose. Not more than six artillerists are required to load and fire a piece in action, and you will have six others to each to make good any loss that may happen. For the drag-ropes and for any thing else, besides loading and firing, active men drafted from the batalions will answer extremely well; and a very few days are necessary, if diligence is used, to

make men, tolerably intelligent, capable of performing every part of a private artillerist.

"The information of the prisoners and others, transmitted to you, do not make the numbers of the enemy to exceed the ideas first entertained of them, nor do I see any thing in it to induce a belief that their progress will be so rapid as not to give you time to make proper preparations, and receive sufficient accessions of force to enable you to give them a vigorous and successful opposition. They do not appear to be much more than five thousand strong, and seem to be unprovided with waggons to transport the immense quantity of baggage and warlike apparatus, without which they cannot pretend to penetrate the country. You mention their having a great number of horses, but they will nevertheless require a considerable number of waggons, for there are a great many things that cannot be transported on horses. As they can never think of advancing without securing their rear, by leaving garrisons in the fortresses behind, the force with which they can come against you will be greatly reduced by the detachments necessary for the purpose. And as they have to cut out the road and remove impediments you have put in the way, this circumstance, with the incumbrance they must feel in their baggage, stores, &c., will inevitably retard their march a considerable time, and give you leisure and opportunity to prepare a good reception for them. If they continue to act in detachments, you will have it in your power to improve it to the very greatest advantage, by falling vigorously upon some one of them with your whole force, which, if you are fortunate enough to succeed in, will be fatal to them.

"I have directed General Lincoln to repair to you as speedily as the state of his health, which is not very perfect, will permit him. This gentleman has always sup-

ported the character of a judicious, brave, active officer, and as he is exceedingly popular and much respected in the State of Massachusetts to which he belongs, he will have a degree of influence over the militia, which cannot fail being advantageous. I have destined him more particularly to the command of them, and I promise myself it will have a powerful tendency to make them turn out with more cheerfulness, and to inspire them with perseverance to remain in the field, and fortitude and spirit to do their duty while in it. The confidence they have in him will certainly go a great way towards producing these desirable ends. You intimate the propriety of having a body of men stationed somewhere about the Grants. The expediency of such a measure appears to me evident; for it would certainly make General Burgoyne very circumspect in his advances, if it did not totally prevent them. It would keep him in continual anxiety for his rear, oblige him to leave the posts behind him much stronger than he would otherwise do; and would answer other very valuable purposes. General Lincoln could not be more serviceable than in command of this body, and no person could be more proper for it than he.

"From the view I have of the matter I should also think it necessary to send General Arnold, or some other sensible, spirited officer to Fort Schuyler, to take care of that post, keep up the spirit of the inhabitants, and cultivate and improve the favorable disposition of the Indians. This is recommended on the supposition that any thing favorable should appear in that quarter."

Colonel Hamilton at this time received a letter from his early friend Dr. Knox, written at Santa Cruz, who observed: "You must be the annalist and biographer, as well as the aide-de-camp of General Washington, and the historiographer of the American war. * * * This

may be a new and strange thought to you: but if you survive the present troubles, I *aver*, few men will be as well qualified to write the history of the present glorious struggle." A fragment of his answer is preserved. "This event," (the evacuation of Ticonderoga,) he wrote, "redounds very little to our credit. For if the post was untenable, or required a larger number of troops to defend it than could be spared for that purpose, it ought long ago to have been foreseen and given up. Instead of that we have kept a large quantity of cannon in it, and have been heaping up very valuable magazines of stores and provisions, that, in the critical moment of defence are abandoned and lost. This affair will be attended with several evil consequences; for besides the loss of our stores, which we cannot well afford, it opens a new and easy door by which to penetrate the Northern States. It will fix the hitherto fluctuating disposition of the Indians in that quarter in their favor, and expose the frontiers of the adjacent country to their depredations. But, though it is a misfortune we have reason to lament, I dare say it will be regarded with you as much more important than it really is, and as materially endangering the success of our cause, which is by no means the case. Our opposition is at this time too well matured and has too great stability, to be shaken by an accident of that kind. While we have a respectable army in the field, and resources to feed, clothe and arm them, we are safe. We have had a force sufficient for the foregoing part of the campaign, to maintain such a superiority over the main army of the enemy as effectually to hinder them from attaining any of their purposes. And, to the northward, with the reinforcements sent up to succor the retreating garrison of Ticonderoga, and the militia flocking in from New England, I think there is little doubt we have by this time a

force adequate to give Mr. Burgoyne a seasonable check. One good effect will result from the misfortune, which is, that it will stimulate the Eastern States to greater exertions than they might otherwise make. By our last advices, the enemy were in possession of all the country between Ticonderoga and Fort George, and our army, nearly equal in number to them, were about to take post somewhere between Fort Edward and Saratoga. The consequences of this northern affair will depend much upon the part that Howe acts. If he were to co-operate with Burgoyne it would demand our utmost efforts to counteract them. But if he should go towards the southward, all or most of the advantages of Burgoyne's success will be lost. He will either be obliged to content himself with the possession of Ticonderoga and the dependent fortresses, and with carrying on a partisan war the rest of the campaign, or he must precipitate himself into certain ruin by attempting to advance into the country with a very incompetent force."

Hamilton, over the signature of Washington, now wrote to General Heath at Boston: "The British fleet sailed out of Sandy Hook the twenty-third instant. The prevailing, and perhaps the most probable opinion is, that they are destined for Philadelphia. But it is not impossible they may intend for the eastward. Proper attention to this should not be wanting. But the bare possibility of it must not prevent your forwarding the remaining continental recruits to their respective regiments with all the diligence you can. The urgency of the occasion to the northward indispensably calls for them. I am sorry to say, that, had the Eastern States, all of them, taken effectual measures to fill and send on expeditiously their several quotas, the misfortune of Ticonderoga could not have happened. But I have the consolation to reflect that I

have used the most pressing and repeated instances to induce them to do it."

The next day Hamilton wrote a private letter to Gouverneur Morris from head-quarters at Coryell's Ferry.

From a minute examination of the probable strength of Burgoyne, he concluded that he could not "advance after taking the necessary precautions in his rear, with more than between five and six thousand men, supposing him to act with his whole collective force, except Canadians and Indians, not by any means numerous."

He then took a view of the American force under Schuyler, which, with Glover's brigade and the recruits would amount to five thousand continentals. "Surely," he observed, "the Eastern States cannot sleep so soundly when the danger is so imminent, but they will reinforce him with eight or ten thousand militia. If this happens, and he cannot stop General Burgoyne's progress, it must proceed from other causes than the want of men. General Washington kept Howe with sixteen or seventeen thousand men at bay.

"Perhaps it may be said there will not be time to collect this force, as the enemy are advancing with very great rapidity. I am much mistaken if there will not be abundant time. The nature of the ground, the difficulty of transporting the immense quantity of bagage, provisions, &c., necessary to accompany an army of five thousand men penetrating an enemy's country; the want of waggons for the purpose; the impediments thrown in their way by cutting off the roads—all these obstacles will retard their march much more than is at first sight imagined, and will give full time to prepare them a good reception.

"On the whole, I am clearly of opinion, that unless Howe co-operates with Burgoyne against your State, it has very little to fear; and I even doubt if he goes to the

southward whether Burgoyne will attempt to penetrate far. At present there is every appearance of a southern expedition. Seventy sail of the enemy's fleet have been seen passing by Little Egg Harbor, making short tacks towards the capes of Philadelphia. Three divisions of the army are arrived here and at Howel's Ferry, four miles up. One is coming on by way of Princeton, &c. Another coming after us by way of Morristown. I wish this last to halt there. Two brigades more had been ordered to cross the North River, and wait further orders. We shall not, however, pass the Delaware till we hear of the arrival of the enemy in the capes of Philadelphia. Nor will those two brigades be ordered on till the same event takes place. We shall act the most cautious part possible in our circumstances. I communicated your letter to the general. He agrees with me in point of the enemy's numbers. With respect to animating the Eastern States, he has written the most urgent letter to their several assemblies, which, I am in hopes, will answer the end you propose from sending persons to each of them.

"It were to be wished your forts and ships were well supplied with cannon, but it is wholly out of the general's line to strip the ships to the eastward of their cannon for that purpose. If your convention were to make application to the Congress or Board of War, it *might* succeed; but I should have very little hope of it."

Two days after,* he wrote to Putnam for Washington stating that the enemy's fleet had sailed out of the capes in an eastern course. "This surprising event gives me the greatest anxiety, and, unless every possible exertion is made, may be productive of the happiest consequences to the enemy and the most injurious to us. I have desired General Sullivan's division and two brigades that left you

* August 1.

last, immediately to return and recross the river, and shall forward on the rest of the army with all the expedition in my power. I have also written General Clinton requesting him instantly to reinforce you with as many militia of the State of New York as he can collect, and you are, on the receipt of this, to send on an express to Governor Trumbull, urging it upon him to assist you, with as many of the Connecticut militia as he can get together, and without a moment's loss of time. The importance of preventing Mr. Howe's getting possession of the Highlands by a *coup de main* is infinite to America; and in the present situation of things every effort that can be thought of must be used. The probability of his going to the eastward is exceedingly small, and the ill effects that might attend such a step inconsiderable in comparison with those that would inevitably attend a successful stroke upon the Highlands. Connecticut cannot be in more danger through any channel than this, and every motive of its own interest and the general good demand its utmost endeavors to give you effectual assistance. Governor Trumbull will, I trust, be sensible of this."

The uncertainties produced by the seaborne movements of the British, and the consequent harassing changes of position between the Hudson and the Delaware were not the only perplexities of the moment. The situation of the northern frontier was made more alarming by the jealousies which long had existed between the people of New York and New England. A letter from the Albany committee mentions: "Our affairs grow more gloomy every day. The New England States are still indifferent to all entreaty. All the militia of Albany are sent to the army. The people in Schoharie say they must lay down their arms if Albany falls. Only two hundred savages have driven in the inhabitants within fifty miles. What

would be the case if a thousand are let loose? Trumbull writes that no aid is to be expected from Connecticut."

The urgency of their situation is also shown in a letter addressed to Governor Trumbull by Van Cortlandt, president of the New York Council of Safety: "The condition of the northern department has become alarming and critical. The evacuation of Ticonderoga was a very unexpected event, and has been attended with an unhappy influence on our affairs. The people are disgusted, disappointed and alarmed. The council are constrained to observe that it is not in their power to afford General Schuyler much aid. Five counties of this State are in the possession of the enemy, three others are disunited by malcontents who meditate a revolt, and are attempting to avail themselves of the present troubles to advance their interested purposes, insomuch that all order and government has ceased among them. Of the remaining six counties, a third part of the militia of three of them, namely Orange, Ulster and Dutchess, has been in actual service since May, and are yet in the field. Westchester has been so harassed by the invasions of the enemy from New York, that, during the last winter and almost ever since, their militia have been obliged to provide for their own defence. A third part of the county of Tryon are ordered to embody without delay, and a considerable proportion of Albany are already marched and marching to the field. Add to this the number of inhabitants constantly employed on the communications, in transportation, &c., &c., and the still greater number who, tempted by prospects of ease or profit, have quitted this invaded State, and sought inglorious quiet among our more peaceful neighbors; and your excellency will perceive how greatly our strength is exhausted. Heaven has blessed us with a plentiful harvest, and it deserves consideration that

other States, besides this, will be affected by the loss of it.

"It is unnecessary to observe to your excellency that the destruction of this State will bring the horrors of war to the doors of many who now seem idle spectators of it. We hope that the State of Connecticut will, on this occasion, exert herself in a manner becoming the character she hath hitherto sustained in the scale of American importance, and that New York will not be left unsupported in this day of trial."

"The characters of our generals who were at Ty., particularly St. Clair's," writes a son of Trumbull,* "are suffering perhaps irretrievably. The minds of the people are much inflamed. Some cry 'Treachery,' some 'Cowardice,' all blame, not without too great reason. My heart is full. General Schuyler is distressed almost to death with vexation. Sir John (Johnson) with McKoy, some regulars, Canadians and savages, are at Oswego waiting to be joined by *Butler* † from Niagara."

The council of Albany prepared a declaration stating "the pain it gave them to find that a measure so absurd and probably chimerical as the surrender of Ticonderoga, should be imputed to the directions of General Schuyler, in whose zeal, vigilance and integrity," they expressed the highest confidence.

The friends of Schuyler felt the delicacy of his situation. Jay wrote him in urgent terms to cause a statement to be made of the causes of that event. He soon received a letter from St. Clair: "The calumny that has been thrown upon General Schuyler, upon account of that matter, has given me great uneasiness. I assure you, sir,

* Joseph Trumbull.

† Walter Butler, colonel of a party of rangers in pay of the British Government, and marked for his cruelty.—*Annals of Tryon County*, 117.

there never was any thing more unjust or cruel, for he knew nothing of the matter until it was over. It was done in consequence of a consultation with the other general officers without the possibility of General Schuyler's concurrence; and had the opinion of council been opposite to what it was, it would nevertheless have taken place, as I knew it to be impossible to defend the post with our numbers. * * * I proposed to General Schuyler to send a note to the printer, to assure the people that he had no part in abandoning what they thought their stronghold. He thought it not so proper at that time." * Aware of the exasperated state of feeling towards St. Clair, and now apprised of the necessity of his retreat, Schuyler preferred temporary obloquy should fall upon himself, rather than concentrated hostility towards an unfortunate, but blameless, gallant, unvindicated fellow soldier.

On the twenty-ninth of July, two days after the date of St. Clair's letter, Congress resolved an inquiry "into the reasons of the evacuation of Ticonderoga, and into the conduct of the general officers who were in the northern department at the time." The wide compass of this inquiry discloses its object. Schuyler was first ordered to repair to head-quarters, and then a committee of inquiry was appointed, composed of five members, three of whom were from New England and a fourth under its influence.† Washington was directed to order an officer to replace him. The next day, a letter was addressed to him from the pen of Samuel Adams, signed by seven eastern members of Congress, pressing the appointment of Gates. Washington asked "to be excused from making the appointment." He assigned as his reasons, "that

* St. Clair to Jay, July 25, 1777.

† Laurens, of South Carolina; John Adams, Dyer, and Folsom, of New England; Roberdeau, of Pennsylvania.

the northern department, in a great measure, had been considered as separate, and more peculiarly under the direction of Congress, that its present situation was delicate and critical, and the choice of an officer to the command might involve very interesting and important consequences." His impressions as to Gates had changed; he was reluctant to evince diminished confidence in Schuyler, whose conduct was unexplained.

During their intercourse in Congress these two great patriots had formed for each other a mutual respect and confidence proceeding from their similar traits of character—energy, method, an exacting punctuality, an uncompromising sense of justice. The difficulties which the insubordination of the Connecticut troops had caused on the northern frontier, Washington is seen to have felt in his own immediate command. As Montgomery had before written, he also wrote from Cambridge to a colonel of the Virginia line: "I earnestly recommend to you to be circumspect in your choice of officers. Take none but gentlemen. Recollect that no instance has yet happened of good or bad behavior in a corps in our service that has not originated with the officers."

Schuyler had seen the ill effects which the jealousies of the colonial troops had produced in the recent war with France. In the controversy as to the disputed lands of New York and New Hampshire, he had taken a conspicuous, decided part. While asserting the rights of New York in his direct mode, he probably partook of the prejudices of that colony, and encountered the prejudices of its eastern neighbors. The extent to which these had proceeded towards him has been shown. He was regarded as the type of the Dutch population, between whom and the "Yankees," as they called them, these long-cherished prejudices had risen to antipathy. The pos-

sessors of the fertile alluvials of the Mohawk believed the eastern people, from their hard, bleak hills, were looking towards them with too inquiring eyes. Their enterprise pressing upon them in every direction, threatened not merely loss of property, but an inroad upon their ancient habits and a subversion of their ancient institutions. All threatened to be new, all was to be changed to a people most averse to change. They hated the restless energy they could not withstand, and shrank from a cleverness with which they could not cope. Their pride also was roused. They were indignant at the influence which would supplant their much loved chief to make room for one whose capacity the discerning denied, and whom many regarded with aversion. "General Gates," the New York delegates wrote, "is far from partial to our State. You cannot be at a loss for the reason. Our revolters seem to possess his esteem, and he has left a most extraordinary recommendation in their favor."

On the fourth of August, the day after Washington declined to select an officer for the northern department, Gates was elected to its command by Congress. "General Schuyler," Duane wrote, "to humor the eastern people, who declare that their militia will not fight under him, is recalled." Gouverneur Morris, who with Jay had hastened to Philadelphia, wrote to Schuyler: "So confident were they" (the eastern members) "in their assertions that their militia would not turn out while you presided, and such, from your own representation, was the gloomy aspect of our affairs there, that the southern members were alarmed, and thought it prudent not to attempt to stem the torrent."* Schuyler answered, "my crime con-

* "That the hostility to Schuyler did not proceed from his imputed misconduct in respect to Ticonderoga, is shown by a letter of Samuel Adams to John Adams, dated Baltimore, Jan. 1777, six months previous to its capture:

sists in not being a New England man in principle, and unless they alter theirs, I hope I never shall be. General Gates is their idol, because he is at their discretion."

Governor Clinton writes, "Connecticut and Massachusetts have not furnished a man for the southern department; nay, scarcely answered the letters sent to them. General Gates is ordered to the command of the northern army, and General Schuyler to join General Washington. The New England men will now be gratified, and ought to turn out, but I fear they will not behave better under any command. The New York militia have turned out with the greatest alacrity, leaving their harvests in the fields."

The people of New England had also their grounds of complaint. They could not forget that the traders of Albany had been instigators of the incursions upon them by the savages; while the fact was forgotten that Colonel Schuyler, the father of the general, had exerted his influence over them to prevent, and had announced to Massachusetts the menaced danger.*

Men of Connecticut felt the growing prejudice and their growing strength. "Any thing New England hardly goes down," was the language of a delegate of that State to its governor. "Early in the dispute they cried out that we were going to cram Presbyterians down their throats. In short there is a fixed aversion to our manners. May it not be a presage that our manners and our arms will sooner or later overcome them? My prudence may be questioned for speaking words tending to disunion, but I consider to whom I write."

This serious discord caused serious alarm at head-

"General Gates is here. How shall we make him head of that army?"—the northern.—*Works of John Adams*, ix. 449.

* Grahame's U. S. iii. 27.

quarters, where the necessity of reconciling a various people at variance with each other, would be felt as the most urgent, as it was the most difficult of duties.

To compose this feud, Hamilton, over the signature of Washington, replied to the Council of Safety of New York on the day of Gates' election to the northern command.

"The misfortune at Ticonderoga has given a very disagreeable turn to our affairs, and has thrown a gloom upon the happy prospects which the campaign, previous to that event, afforded. But I am in great hopes the ill consequences of it will not continue long to operate, and that the jealousies and alarms, which so sudden and unexpected an event has produced in the minds of the people, both of your State and to the eastward, will soon subside, and give place to the more rational dictates of self-preservation and a regard to the common good. In fact, the worst effect of that event is, that it has served to produce those distrusts and apprehensions, for, if the matter were coolly and dispassionately considered, there would be found nothing so formidable in Mr. Burgoyne and the force under him, with all his successes, as to countenance the least languor or despondency; and experience would show, that even the moderate exertions of the States more immediately interested, would be sufficient to check his career, and, perhaps, convert the advantages he has gained into his ruin. But while people continue to view what has happened through the medium of suspicion and fear, there is no saying to what length an enterprising man may push his good fortune. I have the fullest confidence that no endeavors of the council will be wanted to bring your State (with the distresses of which I am deeply affected) to every effort it is capable of making in its present mutilated situation, and they may rely upon it, that

no means in my power shall be unemployed to co-operate with them in the danger that presses upon the State, and through it, threatens the continent. If I do not give so effectual aid as I could wish to the northern army, it is not for want of inclination, nor from being too little impressed with the importance of doing it. It is because the state of affairs in this quarter will not possibly admit of it. It would be the height of impolicy to weaken ourselves too much here, in order to increase and strengthen there; and it must certainly be considered more difficult, as well as of greater moment, to control the main army of the enemy than an inferior, and I may say, dependent one; for it is pretty obvious that if General Howe can be completely kept at bay and prevented effecting his principal purpose, the successes of Mr. Burgoyne, whatever they may be, must be partial and temporary.

"Nothing that I can do shall be wanting to rouse the Eastern States and excite them to those exertions which the exigency of our affairs so urgently demands. I lament that they have not yet done more; that so few of their militia have come into the field, that those few have behaved so inconsistently with the duty they owe their country, at this critical period. But I have, nevertheless, great reliance upon those States. I know they are capable of powerful efforts; and that their attachment to the cause, notwithstanding they may be a little tardy, will not allow them long to withhold their aid at a time when their own safety, that of a sister State, and in a great measure the safety of the continent calls for their greatest zeal and activity. I flatter myself the presence of Generals Lincoln and Arnold in the northern department will have a happy effect upon them. Those gentlemen possess much of their confidence, particularly the former, than whom there is, perhaps, no man from the State of Massachusetts

who enjoys more universal esteem and popularity. And, in addition to that, they may both be considered as very valuable officers. You intimate a wish that some assistance could be drawn from the Southern States at this time. But while things remain in their present posture, and appearances, however illusory they may prove, afford the strongest reason to keep their force at home, to counteract the seeming intentions of General Howe, I could neither ask nor expect them to detach any part of it to the succor of the Northern States, who are so well able to defend themselves against the force they now have to oppose.

"I hope an exaggerated idea of the enemy's force may have no injurious influence on our measures. There is no circumstance I am acquainted with that induces me to believe Gen. Burgoyne can have more than five or six thousand men; and if the force left in Canada is so inconsiderable as the information you send me makes it, he cannot have even so many.

"The representations of prisoners and deserters in this respect are of little validity; their knowledge is always very limited, and their intention, particularly the former, is very often bad. Beyond what regards the state of their companies, no attention is due to what they say. The number of regiments your informant mentions agrees with other accounts, but the number of men in each company which he gives the establishment is not, I am persuaded, the actual state. The British army in Canada last campaign, though they suffered little by action, must have decreased materially by sickness and other casualties; and if the recruits both from England and Germany bore any proportion to those which have reinforced General Howe, the state of their regiments must be greatly inferior to what your information supposes. Reasoning by analogy, as far as it will apply, I cannot imagine the Brit-

ish regiments can exceed two hundred and fifty men each, fit for the field, or that the foreign troops can amount to much more than three thousand men.

"The appointment of General Clinton to the government of your State, is an event that in itself gives me great pleasure, and very much abates the regret I should otherwise feel for the loss of his services in the military line. That gentleman's character is such as will make him peculiarly useful at the head of your State in a situation so alarming and interesting as it at present experiences. For the future, agreeably to your desire, I shall direct my applications to him."

Imperfect intelligence of the investment of Fort Schuyler, of the steadiness of Gansevoort and repulse of the relieving party, of the fall of Herkimer, and the gallant sortie of Willett and defeat of the besiegers, was at this time communicated by Clinton. Hamilton, in the name of Washington, wrote him in terms similar to those addressed to the Council of Safety. "If the loss of some of their most spirited leaders which happened on the occasion, do not operate too forcibly on the minds of the people in that quarter, I should imagine these little successes might be productive of valuable consequences. The Indians, we know, are not a very persevering people, but, on the contrary, are apt to be discouraged by the most trifling miscarriages, and two rebuffs like these would be no inconsiderable inducement with them to abandon the British troops. * * * These little reverses of fortune will also have their influence in abating that confidence which his former uninterrupted successes have inspired into the enemy, and will tend proportionally to revive the drooping spirit of our army. * * * I see with the most sensible pleasure the exertions of your State, dismembered as it is, and under every discourage-

ment and disadvantage. I lament that any causes are sufficiently powerful to prevent that effectual aid from your eastern neighbors which the interest of the public cause and the immediate safety of your particular State so pressingly demand at this time. But though it is dilatory in coming, I cannot but hope it will come before it is too late. I imagine one cause and not the least material, of their delay is, an apprehension of General Howe's army. * * * I am, however, advised, that a body of New Hampshire militia under General Stark had joined General Lincoln at Bennington, and another of Massachusetts militia was partly arrived, and the rest arriving at the same place. A tolerable body of men once collected there, could make Mr. Burgoyne anxious for his rear, oblige him to advance circumspectly, and to leave such strong posts behind as must make his main body very weak, and extremely capable of being repulsed by the force we shall have in front. I should not be very uneasy for the issue, if I could see our northern army recovered from their present dejection and restored to a tolerable degree of confidence and animation." "In addition to the two regiments that are gone from Peekskill, I am forwarding, as fast as possible, to join the northern army, Colonel Morgan's corps of riflemen, amounting to about five hundred. These are all chosen men, selected from the army at large, well acquainted with the use of rifles, and with that mode of fighting which is necessary to make them a good counterpoise to the Indians, and have distinguished themselves on a variety of occasions since the formation of the corps in skirmishes with the enemy. I expect the most eminent services from them, and I shall be mistaken, if their presence does not go far towards producing a general desertion among the savages." He advised the circulating of these ideas with proper em-

bellishments before their arrival. "It would not be amiss, among other things, to magnify numbers."

Two days after this almost prophetic letter, on the eighteenth of August, Hamilton wrote to Robert R Livingston from the camp at Cross Roads. This communication contains a fuller exposition of the same views, and shows his agency in the measures taken, especially the forwarding of Morgan's corps, nor is it less interesting for the deep and earnest feeling he evinces towards New York, his "political parent."

"I most sincerely and heartily sympathize with you in the distress and danger under which your State is laboring at this critical period. I lament its misfortunes as they are wounds to the common cause, as they more nearly interest those for whom I feel the warmest regard, and as they are suffered by a State which I consider in a great measure as my political parent. I wish any thing in my power could contribute to its relief.

"I am fully sensible, with you, that Mr. Burgoyne's successes involve the most important consequences to America, and that a further progress in your State may bring on all the evils you delineate, and most deeply affect the common cause. I agree with you, that the loss of your State will be a more afflicting blow to America than any that could be struck by Mr. Howe to the southward; and I can assure you it is regarded in the same light by others, whose thoughts of the matter are of much more consequence than my own. I may also add that his excellency has afforded the northern army all the assistance he could in his circumstances give, with the least degree of propriety; and were you as well acquainted with those circumstances as I am, you would be perfectly convinced of the truth of what I assert.

"Though I have differed, and still differ, and, I believe,

on the most substantial grounds, with you, as to the numbers of the enemy, yet I clearly perceive from the spirit reigning in our army, and from the unpardonable backwardness of your eastern neighbors, that you have every thing to fear, notwithstanding your most strenuous exertions, which, to the honor of your State, are justly admired, as far surpassing what might naturally be expected from you under so many discouragements. I am so thoroughly impressed with your true situation, that I am fully of opinion if Burgoyne is not speedily checked in his career, he will become the first object to this army, especially if Howe operates so far to the southward as every appearance seems to indicate. Charleston is now thought to be the place of his destination. He has been seen passing by Sinnipinxint, steering southward, twelve days ago; and, as he has not been since heard of, 'tis concluded he must be bound pretty far in that course, and no object short of Charleston is supposed at all worthy his attention. However common sense is against Mr. Howe's going so far to the southward, facts are so strongly in favor of it, that we must give credit to them. It is an inadmissible supposition, that he can be keeping a large fleet so long at sea, merely as a feint, or that he would steer so far out of his way if he really intended to operate to the northward; the more as the season is at hand when he would be liable to heavy gusts on the southern shores, and contrary winds on his return.

"If he goes so far southward, we cannot think of following him with this army; and if Burgoyne continues to penetrate, we must find means to stop him. *This will point out the propriety of uniting this with the northern army*, and falling upon him with their joint force; and perhaps nothing is more to be wished than that affairs should run into this train.

"Before this reaches you, you will be informed that two regiments have gone from Peekskill to reinforce the northern army, and that Morgan's corps of riflemen are on their march for the same purpose. They left Trenton yesterday morning, and as they march light, and vessels are ordered to be ready waiting for them at Peekskill, they will soon be at the place of their destination. *It has been my wish and endeavor for some time past, that* this corps might be sent to your assistance. I expect much from them; they are a picked corps, well used to rifles and to wood-fights, commanded by officers of distinguished bravery, and have been very serviceable in frequent skirmishes with the enemy. I dare say these people will soon chastise the forwardness of the Indians, and I should not be surprised if, after a little time, they make them desert their British friends. Their known inconstancy and want of perseverance give great reason to hope a few drubbings will exceedingly discourage them, and send the greatest part of them home. From every account I am led to believe our misfortunes are greatly owing to a panic dread of the Indians. If this be so, the presence of Morgan's corps will not fail to have the most happy effect. It would be well to propagate through the country and army, such ideas of this corps as will tend to revive the spirits of both inhabitants and soldiers. If their number, which is about five hundred, is exaggerated,* it would do no harm. But of all things, my dear sir, let every topic be carefully avoided, that may tend to breed jealousies beween this corps and the northern troops; such jealousies have been, are, and will be more detrimental to our affairs than any thing besides."

Two objects now presented themselves, an attack upon

* The original is defective; the word "exaggerated" was that probably used.

New York, or a junction with the northern army. In view of these, Hamilton instructed Colonel Dayton to obtain intelligence of the situation of the enemy near New York, their strength and motions, the number of wagons they were collecting, and of boats that might be gathered "for any sudden secret expedition."

Soon after,* over Washington's signature, he wrote to Congress. From the time which had elapsed since advices were received from Howe, it was presumed that he meditated an attack upon Charleston. "The extensive commerce, the vast accumulations of military and other stores in that town and its dependencies, with the eclat it would give his arms, if he should unfortunately take it, afford him stronger inducements to direct his operations there than he could possibly have elsewhere. Matters being thus circumstanced, an important question arises. How this army is to be employed if his intentions are such as I suppose them? It appears to me that an attempt to follow him would not only be fruitless, but would be attended with the most ruinous consequences." Having pursued this train of thought, he observes: "We have no other alternative left than to remain here idle and inactive on the remote probability of his returning this way, or to proceed towards Hudson River with a view of opposing General Burgoyne, or making an attempt upon New York Island, as the situation of affairs shall point out. A successful stroke, with respect to either, woud be attended with the most signal advantages, and would be the best compensation we could make for any losses we may sustain at the southward. Besides these considerations, if, after all our conjectures and reasoning upon the subject, General Howe should be gone to the eastward to co-oper-

* Aug. 21.

ate with Mr. Burgoyne, the army will be, by the movement proposed, so far on its way to prevent, I hope, the success of his enterprise. The above reasons led me to call a council of general officers this morning to take the subject of removing the troops hence into consideration, and I am happy to inform Congress they were in sentiment with me upon the occasion as they will perceive by a copy of the proceedings there had. * * * Nevertheless, as it is a movement which may involve the most important consequences, I have thought proper to submit it to Congress for their deliberation and decision. If it is deemed expedient, we have perhaps not a moment to lose in carrying it into execution; and, under this persuasion, I have sent Colonel Hamilton, one of my aids, who will have the honor of delivering this, to bring me the result of their opinions." Having in view the temper of Gates, he added: "As the northern department has been all along considered separate, and in some measure distinct, and there are special resolves vesting the command in particular persons, in case it should hereafter appear eligible to unite the two armies, it may perhaps be necessary that Congress should place the matter upon such a footing as to remove all scruples or difficulties about the command, that could possibly arise on my arrival there. This I request from a disposition to have harmony, and from my knowing the ill and fatal consequences that have often arisen from such controversies, and not from the most distant apprehension that one would take place upon such an event. The thing, however, is possible, and to guard against it can do no injury." These operations were abandoned in consequence of advices received of the approach of General Howe. His original design was to sail up the Delaware, but on entering the capes, deterred by the supposed difficulties of reaching Philadelphia by water,

among which were the fire ships and rafts, he resolved to pass up the Chesapeake. Baffling winds prevented his coming into the bay until the middle of August, when he made his course, entered the Elk, and, on the twenty-fifth of August, began to disembark his troops at its head.

Three days before, General Sullivan made a descent upon Staten Island with a body of troops chiefly composed of Jersey militia. Here were stationed in a fortified camp more than two thousand men—one regiment of British regulars, two of Hessians, the residue new raised levies of provincials. Sullivan crossed over in the night, surprised part of the enemy, made prisoners two colonels, a number of officers and one hundred and thirty privates. On an alarm he hastened to withdraw, but from an insufficiency of boats, his rear guard was attacked before they could embark. They made a brave resistance, and the American loss was equal to the British. Hamilton wrote him over the signature of Washington, "It is unfortunate that an affair that had so prosperous a beginning should have terminated so disagreeably as in a great measure to defeat the good consequences that might have attended it. * * * I am not sufficiently acquainted with circumstances to form a correct judgment of what might have been expected from this expedition, but from the view I have of them, and from your own representations of the matter, the situation of the enemy seems to have been such as afforded an opportunity of reaping much more decisive advantages than were in fact gained."

The incompleteness of this gallant attempt having given rise to censure, Sullivan demanded a court of inquiry. It was composed of Lord Stirling, McDougall, Knox, Spencer and Clark. The sentence of the court,

drawn up by Hamilton, states, that "the expedition was eligible, and promised great advantage to the cause of America; and that General Sullivan's conduct in planning and executing it was such, that he deserved the approbation of his country and not its censure."

CHAPTER X.

The scene of the operations of the armies under Washington and Howe was between the head waters of the Elk and the Schuylkill, running nearly parallel. The southern border was the Delaware.

This generally level country was intersected by successive small streams, known as the Christiana, White Clay, and Red Clay Creeks, separated from each other by gentle elevations and flowing transversely into the Christiana River, which, uniting with the Brandywine near Wilmington, empties into the Delaware. Of more volume than the other water-courses, the Brandywine, from its forks, near which is a ford called Buffington's to its mouth, takes a southern direction parallel to the Schuylkill.

Below its forks are four other fords, Wistars's, Jones's, Brinton's, and Chad's ford, nearly equidistant from each other within a few miles.

The enemy moved from their place of disembarkation in two divisions, that under Cornwallis to the west of the Elk, that of Knyphausen, who, on the recent return of Heister to Europe, commanded the German auxiliaries to the east of that stream.

The design of this separation of the force computed

at fifteen * thousand men, was supposed to be to prevent the militia from the eastern shore of Maryland repairing to Washington's assistance, and also to hold the command of an extensive country within which to collect their supplies. In this view, Hamilton, on the third of September, in the name of Washington, then at Wilmington, wrote to General Maxwell, who, at the head of a light corps selected from the army at large, was thrown forward to skirmish with and harass their advancing parties. Approving his taking possession of Christiana Bridge, thus only exposing his front, he observed: "I wish you very much to have the situation of the enemy critically reconnoitred to know as exactly as possible how and where they lie, in what places they are approachable, where their several guards are stationed; and the strength of them, and every thing necessary to be known to enable us to judge with precision whether any advantage may be taken of their present divided state. No pains should be omitted to gain as much certainty as can be had in all these particulars." The two divisions of the enemy formed a junction, at the date of this letter, at Iron Hill. Here they encamped. An animating general order was issued by Washington at Wilmington. "Now is the time to reap the fruits of all our toils and dangers. If we behave like men, this campaign will be our last. Ours is the *main* army. To us our countrymen look for protection. Here glory waits to crown the brave. Peace, Freedom and Happiness, will be the rewards of Victory. Animated by motives like these, soldiers fighting in the camp of innocence, humanity and justice, will never give way, but with undaunted resolution push on to conquest. And this, the general assures himself, is the part the American forces now in arms will act, and thus acting, he will en-

* By some statements, 18,000.

sure them success." On the route of Cornwallis, Maxwell being attacked, fell back, after several close, well-directed fires, across the White Clay Creek. The body of the Americans now advanced from Wilmington to Newport on the Christiana behind the Red Clay Creek, distant from the enemy about nine miles. At this post, Washington waited an attack. The British, after an interval of five days, recruiting their horses and gaining intelligence, approached, apparently for this purpose; presenting a heavy column in his front and extending their main body some distance upon his right. During their approach, an enterprise was projected to be accomplished by Maxwell, that was not pursued, as to which Hamilton gave him strict injunctions of precaution and secrecy. Believing that the real intent of the British was, while amusing him in front, to march by his right, pass the Brandywine, gain the heights north of that river, and thus take a position between himself and Philadelphia, Washington changed his position early in the night, and the next morning crossed the Brandywine at Chad's ford. Here he entrenched himself, throwing up two small batteries which commanded this ford, that being the route the enemy would most probably take towards Philadelphia.

"This country," Hamilton wrote to Morris from this place, "does not abound in good posts. It is intersected by such an infinity of roads, and is so little mountainous, that it is impossible to find a spot not liable to capital objections. The one we now have is, all things considered, the best we could find; but there is no great dependence to be put upon it. The enemy will have Philadelphia if they dare make a bold push for it, unless we fight them a pretty general action. I opine we ought to do it, and that we shall beat them soundly if we do. The militia seem pretty generally stirring. Our army is in high health and

spirits. We shall, I hope, have twice the enemy's numbers. I would not only fight them, but I would attack them; for I hold it an established maxim that there is three to one in favor of the party attacking."

The desired opportunity was soon offered.

On the tenth of September, the enemy reached Kennet's Square, a few miles north-west of Washington's position, and eight o'clock the next morning their right wing, under Knyphausen, advanced towards him and began a cannonade whch continued on both sides nearly two hours.

They were attacked by Maxwell, who, crossing the Brandywine for that purpose, took post on some high grounds on each side of a road. The attack was brisk, the fire severe, and destructive. Twice he repulsed them, but pressed by their superior force, he at last retreated. The enemy then halted on the heights south of the river, Knyphausen reconnoitring, and making dispositions to induce a belief that he intended to cross with his whole force.

While this semblance of a purpose to give battle here was kept up, a column composed of British and Hessian grenadiers, light infantry, mounted and dismounted chasseurs, and the artillery, in number nearly seven thousand, under Cornwallis, filed off to the left. With the twofold purpose of avoiding interruption by the creeks to the movement of his artillery, and to insure a surprise, Cornwallis took a circuitous route and crossed the Brandywine about two in the afternoon by easy fords above its forks, six miles to the right of the Americans.

The previous evening, Sullivan was ordered with his division to Brinton's ford, next above Chad's, with directions to post guards at each of the three other fords below the junction of the forks. This he did. With only four

light horse at his command found at Brinton's ford, two of whom were sent to the fords above him, and two retained to carry intelligence to head-quarters; Sullivan being informed, in the presence of Washington, by a person probably employed to give false information, that there were no other fords within a distance of twelve miles, did not extend his observation farther.

About noon, intelligence was received by him, and communicated to Washington, that five thousand men with sixteen field-pieces were marching towards certain fords over the forks, and beyond the fords guarded by him.

Washington immediately decided to take advantage of this disjunction of the enemy's force. Orders were issued to Sullivan to cross the Brandywine and attack the advancing column, while he, crossing at Chad's ford, should engage those in his front. At this moment he was advised by Sullivan of later information contradicting the former, that there was no appearance of troops moving towards the upper fords, which was confirmed from another source, and that he had sent to ascertain the truth.

The orders to cross the Brandywine were consequently suspended. At two o'clock, Sullivan communicated to Washington a note from Colonel Bland confirming the earliest information; and that the advance of the enemy's column, having crossed the river, was two miles in his rear, coming down.

While this uncertainty prevailed, Howe and Cornwallis had passed the fords, moved on, taken an advantageous position above Birmingham meeting-house, and formed for battle.

A little before three o'clock Sullivan received orders to march with his division to join with and take command also of those of Stirling and Stephen, and to oppose the

enemy who were advancing on his right flank. In a few minutes he marched, not knowing where the enemy was, nor what route the other two divisions were to take, and consequently where he should join them. On his way he was informed by Colonel Hazen, retiring with one of the regiments which had been stationed at an upper ford, that the principal part of the British army was close upon him. They appeared about forty rods from his advanced guard. This rendered it necessary he should move to the right and approach the other two divisions which he at that moment discovered drawn up on an eminence in the rear and to the right of his position. He instantly ordered Colonel Hazen to pass a hollow way, file off to the right, and face to cover the artillery. The enemy, seeing this, did not press forward, but gave him time to form his division on an advantageous height in a line with the other two divisions, but nearly half a mile to the left. He then rode on and conferred with Stirling and Stephen, who, on receiving information that the enemy were endeavoring to outflank them on the right, decided that his division should be moved to join the others, and that the whole should incline farther to the right to prevent it. While his division was approaching the others, and before it was possible to form to advantage, the light troops of the enemy, infantry and chasseurs, commenced an attack supported by the guards, grenadiers, and a heavy train of artillery. The American division broke under this unequal conflict, and were thrown into confusion. Sullivan had taken post in its centre with his cannon, which he ordered to play briskly to check the progress of the foe, and to give his disordered troops time to form. The artillery and part of this division held their ground. Meanwhile his efforts, by placing himself at the head of the broken parties to rally them, were repeated, but vain. No

sooner did he form one party, but that which he had before formed ran off, and frequently when there was no immediate danger. He then left them to be rallied by their own officers and by his aides-de-camp, and repaired to the hill where he saw his artillery beginning to feel the effects of the enemy's fire. This hill commanded both the right and left of his line, and if carried, would instantly bring on a total rout, and render a retreat very difficult. Sullivan resolved to hold it as long as possible, to render Sterling's and Stephen's divisions, which yet stood firm, and also Hazen's, Dayton's, and Ogden's regiments on the left yet unbroken, as much assistance as possible from the artillery, and to cover his own broken parties, and give them time to rally. Some rallied; others, though exhorted by their officers, fled. The enemy now bent their principal force upon the hill; the fire was close and heavy, and soon became general. Sterling and General Conway joined him on the hill, and exerted themselves to the utmost to keep up the troops. Five times the enemy drove them from the hill, and five times it was regained, the summit often disputed almost muzzle to muzzle, Sullivan in the hottest of the fire. The general fire lasted an hour and forty minutes, fifty-one of which this contest for the hill was maintained. On the right, where was Stephen's division, the contest was also long and severe; on the left less so. Overpowered by superior numbers, and many of the troops having expended their cartridges, the hill was at last abandoned to the enemy, covered with the dead. Sullivan, to lessen the injurious consequences of the defeat, rallied his troops on every advantageous rise. This resolute fighting continued until after sunset. The conflict was upon ground the Americans had never seen, and the attack began before there was time to form.* The

* John Sullivan to Hancock, Sept. 27, 1777.

Americans were between three and four thousand, the British six thousand.* Of the latter the killed and wounded were a thousand and seventy-eight. The American loss was estimated between seven and eight hundred and ten field-pieces.

In the midst of the attack upon the right wing, a battery of seven pieces was opened by the enemy upon a battery of equal force in charge of the left wing, which consisted of Wayne's Pennsylvania line, Maxwell's light corps, and Nash's brigade ordered to the support of Sullivan. The incessant cannonade between these batteries produced such a column of smoke, that Knyphausen crossed the Brandywine unperceived. Wayne took possession of a height opposite to him. A severe action ensued. The Germans, repeatedly attempting to pass the low grounds near the stream, were as often repulsed.

Greene's division, with whom Washington was, forming the reserve, had taken a position between the right and left wings.

He was about to move to the aid of Wayne, when ordered by the commander-in-chief, who, learning the advance of Cornwallis, had joined the right wing, to hasten to its support. Weedon's brigade, part of this reserve, gained a distance of four miles in forty-two minutes. Ere Greene came up, the right wing had been defeated, and it only remained to check the enemy in their pursuit. This he accomplished, discharging his field-pieces from his rear, as he retired before them, until he reached a position behind Dilworth, indicated by Washington as the place for a stand, in case of a repulse. Here he was met by an order to hold his ground, and, having halted Weedon's

* The statements as to numbers vary. There were two regiments of British grenadiers, two of light infantry, two brigades British, two German, and Ferguson's rifles.

brigade, he passed on to his right with Mughlenburg's, and met the advancing enemy. "A desperate resistance" * was offered to them, and they ceased the pursuit. The Americans retreated to Chester, whence Washington at midnight announced the result to Congress in a few lines, stating that his loss was not large, and his troops in good spirits. "This," General Knox wrote,† "is the most capital and general action of the present war. And when we consider the previous circumstances of the enemy, and the views they had to take possession of Philadelphia by a single action, and the loss they sustained without obtaining their end, it may be fairly concluded, that if the advantage is not on our side, yet they will have but little to boast of."

In a different spirit John Trumbull writes to Gates: "But you see, as usual with us, we have got the victory though we have lost the ground."

In the engagement of the right wing, La Fayette, who had recently been appointed a major-general in the American army, received a slight wound which permanently lamed him.

The propriety of Washington's having made this stand, has been not a little questioned, but it cannot be doubted that, with his characteristic caution, it would not have been made, had it not been of urgent necessity. Public opinion demanded it. His force, small as it was, had been collected and sustained with difficulty. The spirit of the army was high. To have surrendered Philadelphia without a struggle involved consequences both as to the foreign prospects of the country, and as to its domestic credit, of a most serious character. "Every acre," it was truly said, "had its political value."

The fitness of the position taken by him for a contest

* Stedman, i. 292. † Sept. 13, 1777.

with the enemy, has been more questioned. The difficulty of guarding a stream of much extent is indicated, and the dangers of a division of the guarding force dwelt upon. But if the issues of a battle were to be hazarded, it is not easy to indicate a position in this region more advantageous than that selected. The Brandywine was the strongest natural obstacle in an approach to Philadelphia. The other intervening streams were smaller, the elevations along their courses less, every day the enemy was recovering from the effects of his voyage, and at every step of their retreat the Americans would lose heart. The strength of the British was not accurately known, and such was the disaffected temper of this region, that only one individual is seen hastening to Washington to apprise him of their movements, concealed as they were by a fog, and under cover of the hills and thick forests which skirted part of the circuitous route they took.

It is stated that the part of the right wing which first broke and caused the confusion, was in charge of General Deborre, a French officer, who, a court of inquiry being ordered, resigned. As his recent conduct had drawn upon him a severe censure from the pen of Hamilton in the name of the commander-in-chief, his resignation was not regretted. Sullivan did not escape serious question. A member of Congress, present for a time in the field, preferred charges against him; that the result was attributable to his neglect in obtaining, and the inaccuracy of, his intelligence; his circuitous march, and the disorder of his troops. Upon these charges a resolution was hastily passed to recall him. Washington asked to defer executing the order for the reasons, that it "was unhappily adopted, and if carried into execution, would not fail to add new difficulties to his present distresses; but that he did not wish to prevent or to delay a proper inquiry into

General Sullivan's conduct a single instant, when the circumstances of the army will admit." The order was suspended. Chase of Maryland then moved that a direction might be given to Washington to place the Maryland troops under some other major-general, which would have in effect thrown Sullivan out. Reed of Pennsylvania concurred, proposing to extend it to the troops from Delaware. This precipitate procedure was defeated, only four votes approving. They were from these two States, who now first felt the presence of an enemy.

Sullivan did not hesitate to demand a court of inquiry, which was never called. His conduct in the action was commended by officers of highest character;* and as to the imputed neglect as to intelligence, he received from Washington a letter, written by Hamilton. This letter, ascribing to the inaccuracy of the second advice † received from Sullivan the confusion that ensued, stated "the major's rank, reputation and knowledge of the country, gave him a full claim to credit and attention." "His intelligence was no doubt a most unfortunate circumstance, as it served to derange the disposition that had been determined on, in consequence of prior information of the enemy's attempt to turn and attack our right flank; which ultimately proving true, too little time was left us, after discovering its certainty, to form a new plan, and make adequate arrangements to prevent its success. Hence arose that hurry and consequent confusion which afterwards ensued. But it was not your fault that the intelligence was eventually found to be erroneous. All the

* Among these, Colonel Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, then acting as aid to Washington, says Sullivan behaved "with the greatest calmness and bravery."—*Sept.* 24, 1777. Also, letter of Williams to Gov. Trumbull, Sept 13, 1777.

† From Major Spear.

fords above Chad's, from which we were taught to apprehend danger, were guarded by detachments from your division, and we were led to believe, by those whom we had reason to think well acquainted with the country, that no ford above our pickets could be passed without making a very circuitous march. No part of your conduct preceding the action was, in my judgment, reprehensible," and "the whole tenor of it, as far as I have had opportunities of judging, has been spirited and active." Sullivan retained his command. Having left Maxwell at Chester, as a centre for the dispersed troops to rally, the main body retired towards Philadelphia, governed in their route by the changing movements of the enemy and by the inclemency of the weather, it being the season of the equinox. In the mean time two thousand men under Sir Henry Clinton crossed from New York into New Jersey.

Hamilton immediately informed Congress, in the name of Washington, that Putnam had been ordered to send forward a second detachment of a thousand men, and, the same day, instructed General Heath at Boston, "with all possible expedition, to dispatch forward all the continental troops" in Massachusetts. "Not a moment's time is to be lost. The call for them is indispensably urgent." "We are just beginning our march to return towards the enemy." On the fifteenth, the day after the date of these letters, the Americans, to gain the enemy's left, moved on to the Warren tavern, twenty-three miles from Philadelphia. Here they learned that Howe was advancing in two columns. Washington decided to engage him, but as the skirmishers met, a violent storm arose, and the Americans, happily, were enabled to retreat, for their arms and ammunition had become unfit for use. After great suffering they reached the Yellow Springs, a few miles south of the Schuylkill, the seventeenth of September.

Hamilton, in the name of Washington, wrote thence to Congress. "The enemy seem now to be straining every nerve to accomplish their purpose; but I trust, whatever present success they may have, they will ere long experience a reverse of fortune. If they have four thousand men in the Jerseys, it is probable they have something more serious in view than a mere diversion; but I am in hopes when General McDougall comes to unite his force with the militia, General Dickinson will be strong enough effectually to make head against them. Yesterday the enemy moved from Concord, by the Edgemont towards the Lancaster road, with evident design to gain our right flank. This obliged us to alter our position and march to this place, from whence we intend immediately to proceed to Warwick. We suffered much from the severe weather yesterday and last night, being unavoidably separated from our tents and baggage, which not only endangers the health of the men, but has been very injurious to our arms and ammunition. These, when we arrive at Warwick, we shall endeavor as soon as possible to put again into a proper condition; to do which, and to refresh our men, are two principal motives for going there."

Howe, checked by the storm for two days, resumed his march towards the Schuylkill. Directly in his route, at a short distance in his advance, was a quantity of flour stored in some mills which it was important to destroy. For this purpose Colonel Hamilton went forward on the eighteenth of September with a small party of horse under Captain Lee, a gallant dragoon officer of Virginia. The approach to the mills was by a road descending a long hill to a bridge over the mill race. On its summit two videttes were posted. Soon after the party reached the mills, Hamilton secured a flat-bottomed boat, by which he could effect his escape should the enemy overtake

them. A few moments showed the prudence of this precaution. A detachment of the enemy had been ordered to take possession of these mills. The fire of the videttes gave the alarm. The dragoons were ordered instantly to embark. Four of them, with Hamilton, jumped into the boat, while the enemy's horse came clattering down the hill in pursuit of two of the flying videttes. Lee, hoping to regain the bridge, trusted to his horse. This diverted the pursuing party for a moment, while Hamilton, struggling against the furious current of the river, swollen by the recent tempest, gained the shore in safety, though volleys, which were returned at intervals, were fired into the boat, by which two of the party suffered. Lee, equally fortunate with Hamilton, owed his safety to the fleetness of his horse.*

Colonel Hamilton instantly wrote to the President of Congress: "If Congress have not yet left Philadelphia, they ought to do it immediately without fail, for the enemy have the means of throwing a party this night into the city. I just now crossed the Valley ford, in doing which a party of the enemy came down and fired upon us in the boat, by which means I lost my horse. One man was killed and another wounded. The boats were abandoned and will fall into their hands. I did all I could to prevent it, but to no purpose."

At nine o'clock at night he again wrote to Hancock:

"I did myself the honor to write you a hasty line this evening, giving it as my opinion that the city was no longer a place of safety for you. I write you again lest that letter should not get to hand. The enemy are on the road to Swede's ford, the main body about four miles from it. They sent a party this evening to Daverser's ferry, which fired upon me and some others in crossing it, killed

* Lee's Southern War, i. 19.

one man, wounded another, and disabled my horse. They came on so suddenly that one boat was left adrift on the other side, which will of course fall into their hands, and by the help of that they will get possession of another which was abandoned by those who had the direction of it, and left afloat, in spite of every thing that I could do to the contrary. These two boats will convey fifty men across at a time, so that in a few hours they may throw over a large party, perhaps sufficient to overmatch the militia who may be between them and the city. This renders the situation of Congress extremely precarious, if they are not on their guard. My apprehensions for them are great, though it is not improbable they may not be realized. The most cogent reasons oblige me to join the army this night, or I should have waited upon you myself. I am in hopes our army will be up with the enemy before they pass the Schuylkill. If they are, something serious will ensue."

Congress had resolved, should it be necessary, to adjourn to Lancaster, about sixty miles west of Philadelphia. On receiving this intelligence they left the city.

"Not at all unprepared for this, Adams was up betimes, mounted his horse," hastened to Trenton, and thence by Bethlehem to Lancaster, "the course circuitous enough, more than doubling the direct distance between the ends of the journey." *

Again he is seen, still chairman of the Board of War, indulging, on his hurried route, in censures upon Washington. "It was a false alarm which occasioned our flight from Philadelphia. Not a soldier of Howe's has crossed the Schuylkill. Washington has again crossed it, which, I think, is a very injudicious manœuvre." Then looking to the advance of Burgoyne, he writes: "I fear

* Life of Adams, i. 267. Diary of Adams, ii. 439.

he will deceive Gates, who seems to be acting the same timorous, defensive part, which has involved us in so many disasters. O, Heavens! grant us one great soul! One leading mind would extricate the best cause from that ruin which seems to await it for the want of it. We have as good a cause as ever was fought for; we have great resources; the people are well tempered; one active, masterly capacity would bring order out of this confusion, and save this country."

After an engagement between Generals Grey and Wayne, in which the latter was worsted, the enemy crossed the Schuylkill, and encamped upon its banks.

The condition of the Americans now rendered unavoidable a resort to a most unpalatable measure. Congress, anticipating the emergency, had given Washington plenary powers to suspend all officers who should misbehave, to fill up all vacancies under the rank of brigadiers, to impress supplies for the army, giving certificates, and to remove and secure for the benefit of the owners all goods and effects which might be serviceable to the enemy. These powers were to be exercised within a compass of twenty miles from head-quarters, and to continue in force sixty days, unless revoked.

Hamilton was selected to perform a delicate task, under instructions drawn by himself and signed by Washington, dated the twenty-second of September.

"The distressed situation of the army, for want of blankets and many necessary articles of clothing, is truly deplorable; and must inevitably be destructive to it, unless a speedy remedy be applied. Without a better supply than they at present have, it will be impossible for the men to support the fatigues of the campaign in the further progress of the approaching inclement season. This you well know to be a melancholy truth. It is equally

the dictate of common sense and the opinion of the physicians of the army as well as of every officer in it. No supply can be drawn from the public magazines. We have, therefore, no resource but from the private stock of individuals. I feel, and I lament, the absolute necessity of requiring the inhabitants to contribute to those wants which we have no other means of satisfying, and which, if unremoved, would involve the ruin of the army, and, perhaps, the ruin of America.

"Painful as it is to me to order, and as it will be to you to execute the measure, I am compelled to desire you immediately to proceed to Philadelphia, and there procure from the inhabitants, contributions of blankets and clothing, and materials to answer the purposes of both, in proportion to the ability of each. This you will do with as much delicacy and discretion as the nature of the business demands; and I trust the necessity will justify the proceeding in the eyes of every person well affected to the American cause; and that all good citizens will cheerfully afford their assistance to soldiers whose sufferings they are bound to commiserate, and who are eminently exposed to danger and distress in defence of every thing they ought to hold dear.

"As there are also a number of horses in Philadelphia, both of public and private property, which would be a valuable acquisition to the enemy, should the city by any accident fall into their hands, you are hereby authorized and commanded to remove them thence into the country, to some place of greater security, and more remote from the operations of the enemy.

"You will stand in need of assistance from others to execute this commission with dispatch and propriety; and you are therefore empowered to employ such persons as you shall think proper to aid you therein."

While engaged at Philadelphia upon this ungracious service, he received a line from Washington: "Your own prudence will point the least exceptionable means to be pursued; but, remember, delicacy and a strict adherence to the ordinary mode of application must give place to our necessities. We must, if possible, accommodate the soldiers with such articles as they stand in need of, or we shall have just reason to apprehend the most injurious and alarming consequences from the approaching season."

In the execution of this duty, Hamilton addressed a letter in the name of the commander-in-chief to the ladies of Philadelphia, enforcing upon them the claims of their country, which he afterwards alluded to as among the most successful of his youthful productions. It is not preserved.

"All the efforts," it is stated,* "of this very active officer could not obtain a supply in any degree adequate to the pressing and increasing wants of the army." He also caused the military stores and vessels to be removed up the Delaware. "This duty was executed with so much vigilance that very little public property fell with the city into the hands of the enemy." †

Upon reaching Philadelphia, Hamilton again wrote to the President of Congress: "I left camp last evening, and came to this city to superintend the collection of blankets and clothing for the army. Mr. Lovell sends to inform me there is an express going off to Congress, and I do myself the honor to communicate a brief state of things when I left camp. The enemy moved yesterday from where they lay to Valley Forge, and higher up the river, on their old scheme of gaining our right. I don't know precisely where they halted, but our army was preparing to move up also to counteract them. I am this moment

* Marshall, i. 168. † Ibid.

told they marched about twelve o'clock at night for that purpose. The general opinion was, that the enemy would attempt crossing this day—every appearance justified the supposition. We had intelligence that the enemy had, the night before last, surprised Generals Smallwood and Wayne, and consequently dispersed them, after a small opposition. The loss, it is said, was not great, and our troops were re-assembling fast at the Red Lion. This seems to have been a bad look-out, and is somewhat disconcerting.

"By a letter from General McDougall, received this morning, it appears he was on the twentieth, in the morning, at Second River, just setting out on his march towards Woodbridge. He is pressing forward with all possible expedition. The troops were pretty well refreshed and in good spirits."

Having performed these services, Hamilton hastened to the camp near Pott's grove, whence, in the name of Washington, he wrote to Congress on the twenty-third, detailing the movements of the army:

"I have not had the honor to address you since your adjournment to Lancaster, and I sincerely wish that my first letter was upon a more agreeable subject. The enemy, by a variety of perplexing manœuvres through a country from which I could not derive the least intelligence (being to a man disaffected), contrived to pass the Schuylkill last night at the Flatland and other fords in the neighborhood of it. They marched immediately towards Philadelphia, and I imagine their advanced parties will be near that city to-night. They had so far got the start before I received certain intelligence that any considerable numbers had crossed, that I found it vain to think of overtaking their rear with troops harassed as ours had been with constant marching since the battle of Brandywine; and

therefore concluded, by the advice of all the general officers, to march from this place to-morrow morning towards Philadelphia, and on the way endeavor to form a junction with the continental troops under Gen. McDougall from Peekskill, and the Jersey militia under General Dickinson, both of whom are, I hope, on this side the Delaware. I am also obliged to wait for General Wayne and General Smallwood, who were left upon the other side of the Schuylkill, in hopes of falling upon the enemy's rear; but they have eluded them as well as us.

"When I last recrossed the Schuylkill it was with a firm intent of giving the enemy battle wherever I should meet them, and accordingly I advanced as far as the Warren tavern upon the Lancaster road, near which place the two armies were upon the point of coming to a general engagement, but were prevented by a most violent flood of rain which continued all the day, and following night. When it held up, we had the mortification to find that our ammunition, which had been completed to forty rounds a man, was entirely ruined, and in that situation we had nothing left for it, but to find out a strong piece of ground which we could easily maintain till we could get the arms put into order and a recruit of ammunition. Before this could be fully effected, the enemy marched from their position near the White Horse tavern, down the road leading to the Swede's ford. I immediately crossed the Schuylkill above them, and threw myself full in their front, hoping to meet them in their passage or soon after they had passed the river. The day before yesterday they were again in motion, and marched rapidly up the road leading towards Reading. This induced me to believe that they had two objects in view, one to get round the right of the army, the other perhaps to detach parties to Reading where we had considerable quantities of mili-

tary stores. To frustrate those intentions, I moved the army up on this side the river to this place, determined to keep pace with them; but early this morning I received intelligence that they had crossed at the fords below. Why I did not follow immediately, I have mentioned in the former part of my letter. But the strongest reason against being able to make a forced march is the want of *shoes*. Messrs. Carroll, Chase and Penn, who were some days with the army, can inform Congress in how deplorable a situation the troops are for want of that necessary article. At least one thousand men are barefooted, and have performed the marches in that condition. I was told of a great number of shoes in the hands of private people in Philadelphia, and sent down to secure them; but I doubt the approach of the enemy will prevent it. I have planned a method of throwing a garrison into Fort Mifflin. If it succeeds, and they, with the assistance of the ships and galleys, should keep the obstructions in the river, General Howe's situation in Philadelphia will not be the most agreeable, for if his supplies can be stopped by water, it may be easily done by land. To do both shall be my utmost endeavor; and I am not yet without hope that the acquisition of Philadelphia may, instead of his good fortune, prove his ruin.

"General St. Clair, who has been constantly with the army for some time past, can give you many pieces of information which may have escaped me, and therefore I refer you to him for many particulars.

"If there are any shoes and blankets to be had in Lancaster or that part of the country, I earnestly entreat you to have them taken up for the use of the army. I have been informed that there are large parcels of shoes in particular, there. * * *

"I have ordered all the Virginia militia who are toler-

ably armed to come forward and join the army. Those who have no arms are to wait at Fredericktown in Maryland, till they hear whether any can be provided for them at Lancaster. You will therefore be pleased to make inquiry what number can be procured there, and send an express to Frederick with orders for as many men to come forward as there are arms."

Three days after the date of this letter, Howe, having detached Cornwallis to take possession of Philadelphia, encamped at Germantown. Here, surprised at the spirit of his enemy at Brandywine, at the celerity of their rally, and the boldness with which a second engagement was sought, he would have been content, if permitted, to enjoy undisturbed the courtly pleasures of Philadelphia, imagining himself, in its possession, the conqueror of the United States. The Americans, finding all resistance ineffectual, took post in a strong position sixteen miles beyond on the eastern side of the Schuylkill, covered by the Skippack creek.

Hamilton is again seen addressing letters in the name of Washington to the Board of War, to Heath and Trumbull, pressing reinforcements and encouraging confidence. "Many unavoidable difficulties and unhappy incidents," he wrote the latter, "that we had to encounter, helped to promote his (Howe's) success. This is an event that we have reason to wish had not happened, and will be attended with several ill consequences, but I hope it will not be so detrimental as many apprehend; and that a little time and perseverance will give us some favorable opportunity of recovering our loss, and putting our affairs in a more flourishing condition. Our army has now had the rest and refreshment it stood in need of, and our soldiers are in very good spirits."

Gates was also requested, "if his services could be

dispensed with, to direct the immediate return "of Morgan's corps," whose absence had been seriously felt. The expectation of an engagement was assigned by Gates as a reason for not sending him forward. "In this situation," he wrote, "your excellency would not wish me to part with the corps the army of General Burgoyne are most afraid of."

The position of both the main armies was taken with reference to the fortifications which had, with immense labor, been erected on the borders of the Delaware under the eye of Duportail, a skilful engineer from France, and most worthy man, soon after appointed a general of brigade.

The object of these works was to render Philadelphia inaccessible by water, and should it be occupied by an overland march, to control its supplies.

Early in the previous month, the commander-in-chief had, in consultation with several of his officers, made a careful reconnaisance of these defences. The result of this investigation was communicated to Congress in a letter from the pen of Hamilton. The questions were, whether defences could be most effectually made at Billingsport or at Fort Island; and whether one or both should be maintained. The conclusion, after a full review of the relative considerations, was, that "the principal dependence ought to be upon Fort Island and the obstructions there; and that Billingsport ought not by any means to be defended more than as a secondary object."

The erection of a small, but strong, work at Red Bank was suggested, which, though it could not be rendered impregnable, could hold out a long time. Such works as were to be destroyed, it was advised, should be razed immediately, and such additions as were to take place, to be made with the greatest diligence and dispatch. A careful examination of the adjacent country was earnestly recom-

mended. Fort Island or Mud Island, more generally known as "Fort Mifflin," was near the junction of the Schuylkill with the Delaware. Red Bank was an elevation upon the Jersey side, where a fort called "Mercer," was constructed, as proposed. Under the cover of these works, and in mid-channel of the Delaware, chevaux-de-frise were sunk. These, it was believed, could not easily be removed, and would prove serious and dangerous obstructions. Similar impediments had been formed below at Billingsport. In aid of these defences, two frigates and several galleys were relied upon. The larger of these vessels grounded, and was captured. Thus a command of the ferry to Jersey was obtained by the enemy, supplies were thereby furnished to the city, and the communication between the forts and their source of supply cut off.

The loss of the fort at Billingsport, indicated in the recent letter to Congress as probable, soon occurred. It was taken possession of on the first of October by two regiments under Colonel Stirling after a slight opposition, to whose support another regiment was detailed. Thus weakened, Cornwallis with the British grenadiers, a considerable force, and two battalions of Hessian grenadiers holding Philadelphia, Howe seemed to present a favorable moment for attack.

The disposition of his army at Germantown encouraged the attempt.

This village consisted of one long street. On either side were houses built in the ancient German mode with thick, strong walls, a low story, and a steep, overhanging roof. Each dwelling stood detached, with a vacancy or homestead around it.* Removed a short distance on the

* Tacitus "De situ, &c., Germaniæ," xvi. "Vicos locant, non in nostrum morem, connexis et cohærentibus ædificiis: *suam quisque domum spatio circumdat*, sive adversus casus ignis remedium, sive inscitia ædificandi."

same line, stood a large stone private residence in the midst of a greater space, known as "Chew's" house, the summer abode of a former official person.

The main body of the enemy intersected the village near its centre and almost at right angles. It lay encamped with the left wing, on the west side of the road leading through the town, flanked by the Hessians, covered by the Schuylkill and Wisahicon Creek, having the German chasseurs in front. Their right wing was on the east side of the road extending to a wood about a mile from the town, in their front a battalion of light infantry, and the Queen's American Rangers.

At the head of the village nearly opposite Chew's house, were stationed the fortieth regiment under Lieutenant-colonel Musgrave, with a battalion of light infantry, the out-guard considerably in advance near a small eminence called "Mount Airy."

Washington, reinforced by McDougall from New York and by the Maryland and Virginia militia, resolved to strike a blow. Dispositions were made for a combined attack, the temper of the troops promising a happy issue.

Sullivan,* in command of his own and Wayne's division, forming the right wing, was to pass along the Monatawny road, and attack the enemy's left, Conway marching in front. The divisions of Greene and Stephen to form the left wing, and moving down the Skippack road to attack the enemy's right in front, McDougall marching at their head to file off and attack it in flank. Nash's and Maxwell's brigades were to join the reserve under Stirling, and to move down the same road. General Armstrong, an old, tried officer, with the Pennsylvania militia, was to pass down the Ridge road, and crossing

* This statement varies a little from the received account. It is taken from the general orders, in Hamilton's handwriting.

a creek, to turn the left flank, and attack in the rear. Smallwood and Forman, with the militia from Maryland and Jersey, were to gain the old York road by a circuitous route, and reaching the enemy's encampment by a road leading to the Germantown market house, to attack the right wing in front and rear. The pioneers of each division, with all the axes they could muster, each officer and soldier having a piece of white paper in his hat, were to move in front of their respective divisions. Each column was to make its disposition so as to attack the pickets in their respective routes simultaneously at five in the morning, with charged bayonets, without firing, and the column to move on the attack as soon as possible. They were to endeavor to get within two miles of the enemy's pickets by two o'clock, there halt till four, and make their dispositions for the attack. Proper flanking parties were to be thrown out from each column, and communications between the continentals and militia to be kept up by light horse. The motive, as stated by Sullivan, of directing so large a force upon the enemy's right wing, was, that if it could be forced, it must surrender, or be pushed into the Schuylkill.

On the third of October, at evening, the Americans moved. After marching all night, the advance of the right wing under Sullivan, whose road was most direct, reached the enemy before sunrise. Here the surprise was complete. The enemy's left wing gave way to successive charges through their encampment, leaving their tents standing, their baggage, and part of their artillery. Sullivan and Wayne pursued with ardor. At every fence, and wall, and hedge, a stand but unsuccessful, was made. In the mid retreat, Musgrave had the presence of mind to occupy Chew's house. A heavy firing being heard, Colonel Pickering was directed by Washington to order Sullivan to hold his fire,

fearing he was wasting his ammunition, as the haziness of the morning probably prevented a certain view of the enemy. Pickering reported the occupation of Chew's house. The question was, whether to attack or to pass it. Hamilton, Pickering, and other junior officers "urged with zeal" * that it be passed. Knox was of a different opinion, and prevailed. A summons to surrender was given. Musgrave disregarded it. The officer bearing it was shot.

The two divisions under Sullivan were separated, and did not reunite. The left column under Greene being obliged to make a circuit was unable to keep pace with the right wing. Its attack was three quarters of an hour later. Here the enemy were also driven; but while advancing, the right flank of Woodford's brigade was arrested in its course by a heavy fire from Chew's house. Impregnable to musketry, this brigade was drawn off to its left, and its field-pieces directed against the walls. Being six pounders, they made no impression. Here the two divisions of this wing were also separated, nor could they be reunited. That of Greene bearing down upon a part of the enemy's right, broke it, and entered the village. Near its centre, he was met and warmly engaged by the main body of the British. The delay in his attack, the successive halts at Chew's house, and the time thus given to the enemy to rally, its annoying fire, and the consequent separation of the divisions, were seen in all their consequences.

The confusion which followed was increased by the increasing darkness, for the sun had become obscured. The town lying low, a fog still hung over it, and the smoke of the cannon and musketry was rendered more dense by that of burning hay and other combustibles. Amid this thick lurid gloom, friends were mistaken for

* Lee's Southern War, i. 29.

foes, and fell under a misdirected fire, there being often no other guide but the direction of the shot, and no other objects but the flashes of the guns. Nor was the plan of battle carried into full effect. It was too complicated.* The militia under Armstrong came up too late. Those commanded by Smallwood and Forman only appeared on the ground after the retreat of the left wing had begun. The British having rallied, Knyphausen attacked Sullivan, whose troops, unsupported, having expended their ammunition, alarmed by a cry that they were surrounded,† and seeing other troops flying on their right, retreated with as much precipitation as they had advanced, disregarding every effort of their officers to rally them. They, however, brought off their cannon and their wounded. Two of Sullivan's aides were killed. General Nash and his aide Witherspoon received mortal wounds.

Greene was briskly attacked by the British right. After a sharp engagement, two of his brigades which had entered the town began to retreat; those more advanced were surrounded and made prisoners.

Greene used every effort to check the panic, and to rally his retreating troops, turning and firing again and again upon his pursuers, nor was Wayne, whose hopes of victory in his gallant onset were high, less determined. Reaching an eminence in his flight, he turned his cannon upon, and brought the enemy to a momentary stand.

The result of this action again showed the superiority of a disciplined army and experienced officers over gallant but untaught troops, led by men little instructed in the art of war. Fortunately the enemy did not recover sufficiently from their surprise to pursue their advantage, nor in the obscure light would they at first dare to venture far. The retreat was, therefore, attended with small

* Lee's Southern War, i. 29. † Armstrong to Gates, Oct. 9, 1777.

loss. Of the British five hundred were killed and wounded, one-fifth killed. Among these were General Agnew and Colonel Bird. Of the Americans, nearly double this number were killed, more than five hundred wounded, four hundred made prisoners; of the latter was Colonel Matthews of Virginia, a gallant soldier.

Stephen's division, badly commanded, did little more than increase the confusion. Their commander was cashiered for intoxication and misconduct in the retreat, and La Fayette appointed to the command of his division. Colonel Musgrave for his service in Chew's house received a most marked commendation from his sovereign; and Congress passed a vote of thanks to Washington and his army, approving the plan of battle, and applauding their courage. "Though in part unfortunate, it is a great and happy thing," was the comment of old General Armstrong; nor did the bold attempt escape the eye of France, looking with impatience to some warrant for openly espousing the cause of America.

Washington retreated the same day to Perkiomen Creek, whence he resumed his position on Skippack Creek. The seventh of October, three days after the battle, Hamilton, in his name, wrote to Congress:

"It is with much chagrin and mortification, I add, that every account confirms the opinion I at first entertained, that our troops retreated at the instant when victory was declaring herself in our favor. The tumult, disorder, and even despair, which, it seems, had taken place in the British army, were scarcely to be paralleled; and, it is said, so strongly did the ideas of a retreat prevail, that Chester was fixed on as their rendezvous.* I can discover no

* "We know," writes Keith to Lamb, "the enemy had orders to retreat and rendezvous at Chester, and that upwards of two thousand Hessians had actually crossed the Schuylkill for that purpose; that the tories were in the

other cause for not improving this happy opportunity, than the extreme haziness of the weather. My intention is to encamp the army at some suitable place to rest and refresh the men, and recover them from the remaining effects of that disorder naturally attendant on a retreat. We shall here wait for the reinforcements coming on, and shall then act according to circumstances." A statement was added of the misconduct of a part of the crews in the Delaware, of the want of general officers, with a special recommendation of McDougall for promotion. Happy in the opportunity of exhibiting his gratitude for his early countenance, Hamilton observed: "This gentleman, from the time of his appointment as brigadier, from his abilities, military knowledge and approved bravery, has every claim to promotion. If I mistake not, he was passed over in the last appointments of major-generals, and younger officers preferred before him, but his disinterested attachment to the service prevented his acting in the manner that is customary in such circumstances. This, I think, gives him a peculiar title to esteem, and concurs with the opinion I have of his value as an officer, to make me wish it may appear advisable to Congress to promote him to one of the vacancies." A sense of the injustice done St. Clair also prompted the expression of a wish that his trial be brought to a speedy issue; and, if acquitted, "as his general character as an officer is good, that he may again be restored to the service." McDougall was in a few days promoted. St. Clair's vindication was later.

The issue of the battle of Germantown, inspiriting as it was to the public feeling, furnished conclusive evidence that in the present condition of the American troops the

utmost distress, and moving out of the city; that our friends confined in the gaols made it ring with shouts of joy."—*Life of John Lamb*, 184.

hazards of another battle could not immediately be taken. Yet, if possible, Howe must be compelled to withdraw from Philadelphia. This could best be effected by cutting off his supplies. The American position now at White Marsh, fourteen miles from Philadelphia, commanded the fertile region interlying the Schuylkill and the Delaware. Thus nothing could be obtained by the enemy in this direction.

On the day of the action at Germantown, Admiral Howe entered the Delaware, and two days after, his fleet and transports anchored between Reedy Island and Newcastle. Immediately after their arrival, General Armstrong was instructed in a letter written by Hamilton to send a body of Pennsylvania militia across the Schuylkill to intercept the intercourse between Philadelphia and Chester; to cut off the convoys of the enemy; seize the dispatches between their army and shipping; and "to use every method to prevent their getting supplies from the country around them." At the same time, the more important measure of maintaining the river obstructions was taken. Hamilton, in a very earnest letter of instructions in Washington's name to Colonel Greene, a tried and intrepid officer of Rhode Island, charged him with the care of Red Bank, detaching two regiments of continentals from that State under his command, to co-operate with Lieutenant-colonel Smith at Fort Mifflin, and with Commodore Hazlewood in the river. If necessary, the fortification was to be strengthened or contracted under the immediate care of Duplessis, a gallant nobleman from France, who was to take the immediate direction of the artillery. The closing language to Colonel Greene is: "You will be pleased, sir, to remember, that the post with which you are now intrusted is of the utmost importance to America, and demands every exertion you are capable of for its security

and defence. The whole defence of the Delaware absolutely depends upon it, and consequently all the enemy's hopes of keeping Philadelphia, and finally succeeding in the object of the present campaign. Influenced by these considerations, I doubt not your regard to the service, and your own reputation, will prompt you to every possible effort to accomplish the important end of your trust, and frustrate the intentions of the enemy."

Fort Mifflin was the first object of the enemy. Near it was a small island called Province Island. This was taken possession of by them, and batteries were begun which would command the principal work at Fort Mifflin. Colonel Smith saw his danger and endeavored to gain them. "I hope," Hamilton wrote him in Washington's name, "your future endeavors may be more successful. If they once get their batteries fairly erected, the situation of your garrison will, no doubt, become very trying; but, I dare say, they will be duly impressed with the importance of the trust committed to them." He also wrote to Colonel Greene to aid him. Greene was now called upon to exert all his valor. On the twentieth of October the enemy threw a body of troops across the Delaware. As the object obviously was either to storm or to invest Red Bank, though it was believed the hazards of an assault, as the works were strong, would induce the latter, Hamilton wrote General Forman, in the name of the commander-in-chief, requesting him, in the most earnest manner, to use his utmost exertions immediately to collect as large a body of militia as he possibly could, and hasten to its relief. "To you no arguments need be used, either to explain the importance of the object, or to stimulate your zeal for its preservation." He also wrote to Hazlewood, Greene and D'Arendt* expressing the "most ar-

* Oct. 21.

Head Quarters October
15th 1777 —
11 Oclock at night

Sir,

I am perfuaded by intelligence from different quarters, that the enemy are determined to endeavour by a speedy and vigorous effort to carry Fort Mifflin, and for this purpose are preparing a confiderable force. — Their attempt will probably be fudden and violent, as they are hardly in a fituation to delay a matter fo effential to them as that of removing the River - obftructions. — It is of infinite importance to difappoint their intentions in this inftance as their keeping or evacuating Philadelphia materially depends upon their having the communication with their fhipping immediately opened, and it is not unlikely they may defpair of effecting it, if they fhould fail in the puſh, which I ~~apprehend~~ imagine they are now about to make. — Col. Smith's prefent force is not as great as could be wifhed and requires to be augmented, to put him in a condition to make an effectual oppofition. — I would therefore

have you to detach immediately as large a part of your force as you possibly can in aid of his garrison. — I cannot well determine what proportion. This must be regulated by circumstances and appearances, but my present idea is that the principal part should go to his assistance. To enable you the better to spare a respectable reinforcement, I have directed General Sterncomb to send his brigade of militia to Red-bank, or as many of them as he can prevail upon to go. Colonel Angell will also march early to-morrow morning to join you, with his regiment. — The Garrisons and fleets may be informed of these succours by way of keeping up their spirits.

I would not have you trust to the works in the neighbourhood of your post, as these in case of an investiture will fail you; which makes it prudent to have a sufficient number of huts beforehand prepared within the fort. —

I hope, and doubt not, you will keep fully in mind the prodigious importance of not suffering the enemy to get entire possession of the Delaware, and will spare no pains, nor activity, to frustrate their efforts for that

purpose. Be watchful on every quarter, and indefatigable in stopping every avenue by which you are assailable. - Be cautious not to pay too much attention to any one part of your works and neglect the others; but take every precaution to strengthen the whole; for otherwise the greatest danger may be where you least expect it. —

I am Sir
Your most Obed Servt

NB.

The above letter was written by His Excellency's orders; but as he went to bed before it was finished it will be handed you without his signature. —

Alex Hamilton A.D.C.

Colonel Greene
Commanding Officer

Red Bank

dent desire that harmony and a good understanding between the fleet and the garrisons may be mutually cultivated. On this every thing depends; nothing but disappointment and disgrace can attend the want of it. The best designs and most important pursuits have been, and ever will be, defeated by foolish differences, when they exist between those engaged in them."

The effect of these injunctions was now brought to the test. On the day they were written, four battalions of Germans, amounting to about twelve hundred men,* commanded by Count Donop, landed on the east side of the Delaware, and moved on to Haddonfield. At three o'clock the next morning they advanced towards Red Bank, but, delayed by a necessary detour, they only arrived at noon within four miles of the fortification.

This fort was an intrenchment—the parapets of the retrenchments effectually fraised—in the centre of extensive unfinished earthen works.

The advance of the enemy was first descried on the edge of a wood to its north, nearly within cannon shot. Colonel Greene, too weak to hold the extensive outworks, retired his men within the inner intrenchment, and posted them for action. A summons to surrender was sent forward. The bearer was told the fort "would never be surrendered." Donop, who had come on, intending a deliberate attack, threw up a battery, and commenced a brisk cannonade.

A small party of Virginia troops, ordered in the emergency to reinforce Fort Mifflin, had preceded the Hessians, and reached Colonel Greene on its route. The commander, Colonel Simms, proffered his aid. At first it was accepted, but Greene, on reflection, declined diverting him from his destination. Simms, filing off through the postern

* Major Ward to Washington, Oct. 23, 1777.

gate of the fort, embarked in boats provided to convey him across the river.* Donop, discovering the embarkation, and not doubting that it was a part of the garrison abandoning the post, resolved on instant assault. He rushed into the outworks, and finding them undefended, led his troops up to the abatis, shouting "Victoria," and waving their hats. A deadly and continued discharge of guns and small arms met the assailants in front from the fort, and in flank from a part of another looped intrenchment. The soldiers reeled, and retreated under the close, unerring fire. Their officers rallying them, were seen falling, while attempting to cut a way through the abatis. Donop, especially distinguished by his military order, by his noble figure and bearing, was mortally wounded.

Another column attacked the southern part of the work, passed the abatis, traversed the fosse, and mounted the berm. A few got over the pickets, but the fire from within drove them back. The assailants retreated in confusion, the galleys pouring a fire upon their flank. They lost one-third of their number, of the garrison only eight were killed, seven and twenty wounded.

The plan being a simultaneous attack on both the opposite forts, the enemy's fleet had been signalled to advance. The Augusta, a sixty-four, the Roebuck, a forty-four, the Merlin of eighteen guns, and a galley, came up through the lower chevaux de frise, and were attacked by the American floating batteries and galleys. Seeing the repulse of Donop, the enemy's vessels, the next day, endeavored to fall down the river. The Augusta and Merlin grounded. An incessant fire was kept upon them, and they exploded, The firing now ceased on both sides, when the Roebuck dropped down, and passed the lower works.†

* Lee's Southern War, i. 33. † Commodore Hazlewood's Report, Oct. 26.

Congress paid the honors due for this gallant defence to Greene, Smith and Hazlewood, voting to each the thanks of the American people, and an emblematic sword.

Sad hours had meanwhile passed on the eastern bank of the Delaware. Extricated from among the dead bodies of his soldiers, the youthful Donop was approached by Duplessis. Perceiving from his accent that he was a French officer, he exclaimed in that language, "I am content. I die in the hands of honor itself." Tenderly nursed by Duplessis, he died the third day. From his death bed, he wrote to Count St. Germain, commending this young officer to his kindness. As his last moment approached, contrasting his own fate with that of the gallant volunteer in a glorious cause, the expiring soldier said, with his latest breath, "It is finishing a noble career early, but I die the victim of my ambition and of the avarice of my sovereign."*

* De Chatellux's Travels, 260–266.

CHAPTER XI.

THREE days after these brilliant affairs, authentic advices were received of the issue of the campaign at the north. Although Burgoyne reached Skenesborough on the ninth of July, such were the obstructions interposed by Schuyler and the difficulties of the route, that his progress was very slow. On both sides of his line of march large trees were felled into his path. The artillery mired at every step. So numerous were the creeks and marshes, forty bridges or causeways were constructed by him, one nearly two miles long, of logs. The scalping of a young female under circumstances of sad and peculiar interest had roused the whole country; vengeful wrath succeeding to affright.

Delayed in this wilderness by the unexpected impediments, and afflicted with the barbarity of his savage allies which he labored to prevent, Burgoyne did not encamp upon the Hudson, until after the lapse of sixteen days, a distance from Fort George of only eighteen miles. He was now buoyant with the hope that the prize was within his grasp. Yet the spirit of his enemy ought to have warned him of his dangers. On his way, a sally was made from Fort Anne. The Americans were driven back. They again formed and rushed on, their officers shouting to

them to advance, driving the British before them. These retreated to a hill, where the pursuit ceased for want of ammunition. Even the picket guard had not bullets for the night.

The scenes of distress among the poor inhabitants, flying from their farms and habitations, were most grievous; their immense crops of wheat and corn destroyed or abandoned, many of them, without means of subsistence.

On the approach of Burgoyne, Schuyler retired from Fort Edward to Saratoga, where he issued a proclamation invoking the people to repair to his standard, and threatening punishment as traitors to those joining the enemy. His total force was two thousand five hundred continentals, and two thousand militia. The British and German regulars advancing upon him, were about six thousand.

Hoping reinforcements, he intended taking advantage of some heights at Moses Creek, five miles below, there to have met his adversary. No reinforcements came up. "A great part of the militia was dismissed to reap their harvests, others deserted by companies." * Thus reduced, instead of strengthened, Schuyler retired to Stillwater, a few miles down the Hudson. Here at first he ordered Lincoln to join him. But learning the embarrassments of Burgoyne, and the feeble garrison at Ticonderoga, he directed him with the eastern militia to move to his rear, and cut off his supplies. Notwithstanding his own diminished strength, being informed of the advance of St. Leger, but not of his repulse, he ordered Arnold, as advised in the letter written by Hamilton, with three regiments of regulars to relieve Fort Schuyler. Thus weakened by these provident measures, with the approval of a council of war, he fell back to Van Schaick's Island, a very defensible position, at the confluence of the Hudson

* Corres. Revo'n., i. 515.

and the Mohawk, which he began to intrench, intending to make a stand.* "We propose," he wrote, "to fortify our camp, in hopes that reinforcements will enable us to keep our ground, and prevent the enemy from penetrating further. Not a word from Massachusetts on my repeated applications; nor am I certain that Connecticut will afford us any succor." †

The loss of his means of transportation, and the fear of an interruption of his communications with Lake George, whence he drew all his supplies, now prompted Burgoyne to possess himself of Bennington, a town twenty miles east of the Hudson. It was the depository of a large quantity of stores and wagons, under the protection of small temporary groups of militia. To capture them and to mount his cavalry, he detached thither a party of about five hundred men under Colonel Baume, one third dismounted dragoons, fifty British rangers, the residue provincials, Canadians and Indians. In their support, he ordered Colonel Breyman to proceed to Battenkill, on a rapid stream of that name emptying into the Hudson, and advanced his main body.

Baume encountered a much larger force than he had anticipated, led on to battle by a person familiar with arms. John Stark, the son of "a Glasgow man," a Scotch presbyterian, had, in frequent conflict with the Indians, shown such prowess as "a ranger," that his name was familiar to the ear of every borderer of his native New Hampshire, whose energetic colonial militia system had

* "General Schuyler, after the capture of Ticonderoga, collected the scattered remnants of the brigades of General St. Clair, and with these and some militia, gathered by great exertions, took post near Halfmoon. This was the nucleus of the army, which was afterwards put under the command of Gates." —*Leben und Wirken des Friederichs Adolph Riedesel*, ii. 192. Leipzig, 1836.

† Aug. 4.

well prepared her for the struggles of the revolution. He was at the battle of the "Bloody Pond" near Fort Edward, rose to the rank of colonel, was with Amherst at the taking of Ticonderoga from the French; and in the region near which he now rendered his most signal service to his country, became known to Schuyler during the advance of Lord Howe. At Bunker's Hill he was on the left of the American line; and in the vanguard with Sullivan when he dashed into Trenton. Men of inferior merit were promoted above him. He retired dissatisfied.

Schuyler knew his value. He appealed to his patriotism, and persuaded him in this great emergency to resume his sword. The militia of New Hampshire hastened to his standard, and, augmented by those under Warner, numbered two thousand men.

Baume saw his danger, ordered Breyman to hasten forward, and quickly intrenched himself. Stark fulfilled the promise of his life. He boldly stormed the intrenchments, killing and making prisoners near the whole of the enemy. "The militia," the veteran wrote, "advanced through fire and smoke, and mounted breastworks well fortified and defended with cannon."—"The battle was the hottest I ever saw. It was like one continued clap of thunder." *

Breyman arrived, but too late. He attacked the pursuing militia, when Warner came up with a party of continentals. The rest of the Americans followed. After a severe conflict, losing his baggage and artillery, Breyman escaped under cover of night, meeting Burgoyne advancing with a small force to his aid. "Our troops," Lincoln wrote, "behaved in a very brave and heroic manner. They pushed the enemy from one work to another, thrown

* In compliment for his gallantry, Massachusetts voted him "a suit of clothes and a piece of linen."

up on advantageous ground, and from different posts, with spirit and fortitude, until they gained a complete victory." In these affairs the enemy lost six hundred men, beside a large number of arms. These successes, with those near the Mohawk, not only greatly weakened Burgoyne, but imparted a new courage to the till then desponding Americans. The confident letters written by Hamilton from head-quarters, were thus fulfilled.

The defeats of these detachments took place on the sixteenth of August. Three days after, at the moment of his dawning glory, when the New York regiments had arrived from below, when Lincoln was about to join him with a considerable force, when Arnold's return was expected, and Morgan's rifles were at hand, and the army with him were recovering their spirits,* Schuyler was superseded in his command by the arrival of Gates. Notwithstanding this gross wrong and indignity, he was true to his own fame. "I am resolved," he wrote, "to make another sacrifice to my country, and risk the censure of Congress by remaining in this quarter, *after* I am relieved, and bringing up the militia to the support of this weak army." Do what Congress might, he felt that he had the confidence of the people of New York whom he so long had served. "Do not, my dear friend," he wrote, "be uneasy on account of my ill treatment. I am incapable of sacrificing my country to a resentment, however just, and I trust I shall give an example of what a good citizen ought to do when he is in my situation." His first act proved his magnanimity. Gates was met

* Jonathan Trumbull to Governor Trumbull, Albany, Aug. 6, 1777: "Our numbers with General Schuyler are about 6,000, including militia; the continental troops rising of 4,000, and these recovering their spirits, and beginning to shake off their panic. The tories begin to think there is no faith in Mister Burgoyne, nor any safety in his protections."

with courtesy. "When he took the command," Schuyler wrote, "I informed him that I had advised Congress of my intention to remain some time in the department, to afford him any assistance in my power, and entreated he would call upon me whenever he thought proper. He has, however, not done it. He sent for General Ten Broek from town to a council of war, but not for me." "The commander-in-chief of the northern department," Morris answered, "may, if he pleases, neglect or disdain to receive advice, but those who know him will, I am sure, be convinced that he wants it."* Schuyler, removed from command, returned to Albany to quicken the advance of the militia, and forward supplies to the army.

Soon after, Hamilton, as aide-de-camp, acknowledged † advices received from Gates. "The signal advantages gained over the enemy by Generals Stark and Herkimer, at so gloomy and distressing a period, were events as happy as unexpected, and bid fair entirely to change the face of affairs, and frustrate all Mr. Burgoyne's sanguine expectations. The new spring they must have given to the spirits of the country, it is to be hoped, will bring you sufficient reinforcements, at least to check the further progress of the enemy, and prevent their reaping the fruit of their former success." Having mentioned the recent approaches of the enemy, he added, "As the Eastern States can be no longer under any apprehension of a visit from Mr. Howe, his intentions against Philadelphia being reduced to a certainty, we may hope our northern army will derive a decisive superiority over the enemy from the full exertion of the whole force of those States."

Two days after, on the first of September, he again wrote to Gouverneur Morris:

"Agreeable to the intention of the council, I have de-

* Life of G. Morris, i. 144. † Aug. 29.

livered their inclosed letter to his excellency, who, after perusing it, has sealed and forwarded it to Mr. Hancock.

"The relieving Fort Schuyler is a very happy and important event, and will concur with the two happy strokes given by Herkimer and Stark, to reverse the face of affairs, and turn the scale against Mr. Burgoyne. I hope Captain Montgomery's suggestions may be right as to his being obliged to advance; but I fancy, if he once thinks it unsafe, he will not be bound by such an empty punctilio as to risk the destruction of his army. As General Howe is now fairly set down to the southward, the Eastern States, no longer under any apprehensions from him, will be disposed, I am in hopes, to exert their whole force; and if they do, I shall wonder at it if Mr. Burgoyne advances with impunity."

The defeat at Bennington left Burgoyne entirely dependent for his supplies on Fort George, of which the outer works had been laid in ashes by the Americans. The delays incident to their transportation compelled him to halt until the thirteenth of September, before he crossed the Hudson, which he did on a bridge of boats, taking post on the heights and small plain of Saratoga.

His expectations of aid from the Americans now wholly failed him. "The great bulk of the country," he wrote to his government, "is undoubtedly with the Congress, in principle and zeal; and their measures are executed with a secrecy and despatch that are not to be equalled. Wherever the king's forces point, militia, to the amount of three or four thousand, assemble in twenty-four hours, bring with them their subsistence, and, the alarm over, return to their farms. The Hampshire Grants in particular, a country unpeopled and almost unknown the last war, now abounds in the most active and most rebellious race of the continent, and hang like a gathering

storm upon my left." He deplored the difficulty of intelligence from Howe.

Every day being of value to him, he commenced his advance along the western margin of the Hudson. On both sides of this beautiful river, the hills which had trended to the west and south near Lake George, forming "the Oxbow," are seen facing each other along its narrow course in almost parallel ridges; those on the east, backed by loftier receding elevations, extended to the edge of the stream. On the western bank, continuous wooded heights, only broken by deep ravines, left a small, winding pathway. The inflowing rills, often swollen by the quick upland storms, were bridged. These frequent bridges, broken up by Schuyler, were to be repaired, and the thicket of fallen trees to be removed.

In the mean time, Gates was deriving the advantage of the efforts and counsels of Washington. A letter of the third of September from the station Schuyler had fallen back to—Van Schaick's Island, shows the necessity of that retrograde movement and the new strength he was gaining: "The militia," he wrote, "are coming daily to this camp, and General Lincoln's; and I have the most sanguine expectations of being very soon in a condition to advance upon all quarters. General Arnold's division, together with the reinforcement I sent him, are all returned, and Colonel Morgan's corps are all arrived in camp." Glover's alert and dauntless regiment now came up. A detachment from Lincoln's force had recaptured, with the loss of only nine men, the old French lines of Ticonderoga, taking three hundred prisoners, two hundred bateaux, an armed sloop, several gun boats, arms and ammunition. Though the attempt upon the fortress failed, these means of retreat for the invading army were thus lost.

Lincoln now apprised Gates of Burgoyne's intention to remove his heavy cannon to a position where the river narrowed above Stillwater, which had previously been occupied by Schuyler, and advised him to take possession of it.

Thither Gates advanced, and, intending to receive the enemy, dispositions for defence were made.

The western ridge, known as "Bemis Heights," here rises to a commanding elevation, from which were seen the blue broken mountain chains of Vermont, its deep valleys and dark forests, under intervolving clouds; and below, the Hudson threading its way through a narrow defile. This vantage ground had been selected by Arnold and Kosciusko, under whose practised eye intrenchments were thrown up at right angle to the defile, with enfilading works beginning near the hill top and ending at the river's edge in a large battery, to protect a floating drawbridge turning upon swivels, built by Schuyler from his own purse. In front of these intrenchments were thrown out pickets, covered by Mill Creek, beyond which the British were encamped.

Upon the brow of this hill and on the defile was posted the right wing under Gates, formed of the tried brigades of Glover, Nixon and Patterson. On the high battle field at the left of Gates was Arnold with Poor's New Hampshire men, the two militia regiments of New York under Livingston and Van Courtlandt, some troops from Connecticut, Morgan's sharp shooters in advance. In the centre were Learned's brigade, and several militia regiments of Massachusetts and New York.

Burgoyne advanced with presuming confidence, encouraged not a little by the recent change in the command. He had felt the obstacles interposed by Schuyler at every step of his progress, and expected to encounter

his energy on the field of battle. The substitution of Gates, whom he called "an old midwife," he felt, assured him an easy victory.

Having approached the American position, he threw up intrenchments, and on the nineteenth of September made dispositions for an attack, his left wing on the river border under Phillips and Riedesel, including the train of artillery and a German corps. These were to move down the river defile. Westward, on the heights in the centre, were Burgoyne and Brigadier Hamilton, and on their right Fraser, Ackland, Balcarras and Breyman, with their respective corps of artillery, infantry and rifles. These, while the left wing was engaged, were to make a circuit through the woods, and fall, at a concerted signal from that wing, upon the rear of the Americans.

While the British left advanced, Gates remained in position until noon, resolved to receive them covered by his intrenchments, when Arnold, impatient for action, was permitted to advance. Morgan's rifles, thrown forward, drove the front picket of the right wing, pushed on impetuously, were for the moment repulsed, and retired upon a supporting party advanced by Arnold. Morgan rallied. Arnold now attempted Fraser's right, but too weak to overcome him, asked reinforcements from Gates, who refused them, "as he would not suffer his camp to be exposed," threatened as he feared it was.

Arnold then changed his front, and under cover of a thick wood, countermarched to Fraser's left. Here were the British regiments of the centre, which he attempted to break. Their right wing came up—Balcarras with his grenadiers preceded by Breyman with his German rifles. Four New England regiments, under Lieutenant-colonels Brooks, Cilley and Scammel, reinforced Arnold, who drove the enemy before him. Gates remained inactive

in his quarters. Had his wing advanced, for at this time no enemy was near him, victory was certain. But Phillips, disengaged, was thus free to act. A part of his artillery was moved through the woods, and with Riedesel's heavy dragoons bore upon Arnold, whose strength now amounted to three thousand men. Frequent charges of the British bayonet were made, but the Americans, driven back, came up and repeatedly renewed the fight. The fluctuating conflict was thus continued until nightfall, when the Americans retired unmolested to their lines. The British lay near the field of battle on their arms, and claimed the victory. The Americans felt it was theirs. They had been the assailants throughout the day, and manfully held their ground. Their loss in the field was less than that of their adversary, who, now deserted in great numbers by the Canadians and Indians, shrinking from the brisk and deadly fire of Morgan from coverts and tree tops, was nearly reduced to his regular troops.

Burgoyne, who had done all a soldier's duty on the field, saw his danger, but still resolved, if possible, to advance, looking for succor from New York, and relying on the discipline of his troops. Arnold did not less rejoice in the courage of the soldiers, and bore off the honor of the day.*

Gates alone withheld the acknowledgment of his merits. Conscious of his own inactivity, he omitted all mention of him in his brief report to Congress.† In this report he says: "This skirmish" (Morgan's) "drew the main body of the enemy, and a brigade from my left to support the action, which, after a short cessation, was renewed with great warmth and violence."

* "The enemy were led to the battle by General Arnold, who distinguished himself in an extraordinary manner."—*Stedman's History.*

† Gates to President of Congress. Camp Height above Bemis, Sept. 22.

In his purposed injustice to Arnold, he could not have passed a more severe censure upon himself; that an action was permitted to be fought by a brigade drawn from the left, without his order, without plan or concert, without general guidance, with "the main body of the enemy," their commander at their head.*

Indignant at the withheld reinforcements, Arnold publicly reproved Gates, who thus weakly revenged himself. His plea was an insufficiency of balls and ammunition. How true, it is not now easy to determine, but it would be remarkable, if, while the left under Arnold was amply supplied, the larger body, who held the position of chief importance, should have been unprovided. This plea was not interposed by Gates at the time. It would seem to have been an afterthought.

The following day was employed by either army in strengthening its position. Burgoyne was now within cannon-shot of the Americans, his left extended from the brow of the heights, covered by breastworks, to the river, his right protected by new intrenchments from hill to hill, upon which redoubts were erected. The chief object of the Americans was, their right being secure, to prevent being outflanked on their left, as the centre was separated from the enemy by difficult ravines. With this view, their intrenchments were carried a long distance over the hills to a crowning eminence, which commanded the only access on the heights between the river and the woods. Upon this eminence a log fort was raised in the centre of the line, intrenched and palisaded, while, in case the

* "The engagement first began with the riflemen and American militia, who were supported as necessity required, *without any previous disposition.*"—*Chastellux's Travels*, i. 413. *Civil War in America:* "Gates, the commander-in-chief, remaining in a star redoubt, with about 4,000 men to defend his works."

enemy should pass its fire, successive batteries were formed upon a ravine running south towards the main position on the river.

The day after the battle, a message from Sir Henry Clinton reached Burgoyne, announcing his intention to attack the forts in the Highlands, and thence to advance.

As this was to take place about this time, Burgoyne replied, detailing his situation, urging the necessity of a diversion, and stating his purpose to wait in his encampment until the twelfth of October, to which period he hoped his provisions would last. He now reduced the number of his rations, and proceeded fortifying his camp.

In obedience to his orders, Lincoln reached Gates, bringing tidings of the recent successes of his detachment to Ticonderoga. He was soon followed by his command, amounting to about fourteen hundred men, chiefly mountaineers. The right wing of the American army, wholly composed of eastern troops, continentals and militia, was placed in his charge.

While Burgoyne was in anxious suspense, there was strife in the American camp. Arnold, despising and resenting Gates, encouraged by previous exhibitions of his weakness, was loud in censure. He insisted upon the command of the left wing. This Gates refused. He threatened in his wrath to leave the camp. The subordinate officers proposed an address to him of thanks for his recent gallant service, and urged him to remain. The general officers would have interfered with Gates, but he was not to be approached. Arnold's better genius at last prevailed. He decided not to go. Wounded by ill treatment, and chafing with passion under Gates' marked disrespect, he at last wrote him, charging him with being actuated by jealousy, declaring his purpose to continue with the army at that critical juncture, governed by "zeal

for the cause of his country, in which he expected to rise or fall."

Congress had done him great wrong, in despite of Washington's remonstrances. He was now insulted in the moment of signal service. A sense of injustice rankled in his bosom, and dire thoughts of revenge, perhaps, now began to germ. How soon was taught the lesson that brave bad men are not to be trifled with by those in authority.

Arnold's exhortation to Gates was fully warranted by events which also excited great solicitude at head-quarters, where intelligence was received on the seventh of October, that the enemy had proceeded up Hudson's River from New York, and landed at Verplanck's Point. Hamilton immediately * wrote to Livingston, governor of New Jersey, in the name of Washington: "This circumstance is somewhat alarming, as the situation of our affairs this way has obliged us to draw off so large a part of our force from Peekskill, that what now remains there may perhaps prove inadequate to the defence of it. Should any disaster happen, it is easy to foresee the most unhappy consequences. The loss of the Highland passes would be likely to involve the reduction of the forts. This would open the navigation of the river, and enable the enemy with facility to throw their force into Albany, get into the rear of General Gates, and either oblige him to retreat or put him between two fires. The success of the present attempt upon Peekskill may, in its consequences, entirely change the face of our northern affairs, and throw them into a very disagreeable and unfavorable train." In this view, he urged him to march as large a part of the Jersey militia as could be prevailed upon to go, "with all expedition to the aid of Putnam."

* Oct. 8.

"You will not only keep in view the importance of securing these passes, but the necessity of doing it without delay," were the instructions of Washington to Heath the day before he passed from New York to the Jerseys in the previous autumn. "Lose not a moment in choosing the grounds on the east and west side of the river, on which your intended works are to be erected. Let your men designed for each post be speedily allotted." To encourage his men in their toil, this faithful soldier labored in their midst with his own hands, and the defences of the Highlands of the Hudson, regarded as the citadel of the nation, were vigorously commenced.

These Highlands begin about forty miles from the city of New York, are nearly twenty miles in width, the river passing through their midst, presenting on either side, for a distance, rugged and inaccessible steeps.

On its south-eastern bank, where the river is at its narrowest point, rising to a perpendicular altitude of more than a thousand feet, is an elevation known among the Dutch, from some fancied resemblance, as St. Anthony's Nose, its base washed by the Peekskill. On this was erected Fort Independence. Another fort, six miles above, had been built in a dip of these Highlands, called "Fort Constitution." These constituted the fortified defences on the eastern banks.

The borders of the Peekskill had been selected as the station for the troops, sheltered by the Highlands from the inclement winds of the long winter, earliest approached in the spring, and drawing its supplies of men and arms by a short route from the most peopled parts of southern Connecticut.

Upon the high western bank of the Hudson, the plan of a fortification had been laid out early the previous year, which was called "Fort Montgomery." It was

seated on the summit of a spur of the mountain, here a little more than a hundred feet high, separated from another more elevated spur by a small creek emptying into the Hudson, on which was built another work called "Clinton."

The former of these was much the larger. Though probably intended as a permanent fortification, it had more the character of a field work, was of an irregular form, the faces of its enceinte nearly following the configuration of the crest of the elevation on which it was built. The general outline was quadrilateral, presenting broken fronts. On the northern, where the principal assault was made, were two projections en cremaillere flanking it. The southern front was similarly guarded.

Fort Clinton is described* "as a circular height defended by a line of musketry with a barbette battery in the centre, of three guns, and flanked with two redoubts," though its form was also four-sided. One of these redoubts was a star fort, intended probably as a citadel; the other, with an open gorge, occupied an elevated point in advance of the western and southern fronts, overlooking the slopes and furnishing flanking fires to these fronts. The guns in both forts numbered sixty-seven, a few of them thirty-two pounders, with every requisite means of defence in abundance.

The approaches to Fort Clinton were through a continued abatis, a quarter of a mile in length, exposed to the fire of ten pieces of artillery.†

At the base of the former height, a heavy boom of timber was sunk, and, in advance of it, an iron chain of great strength extended from shore to shore.‡ Behind these were two frigates, two galleys and a sloop-of-war,

* Sir Henry Clinton's Report. † Civil War in America, 327.

‡ Lee's Southern War, i. 13.

deemed, with the commanding fire of the forts, an ample water guard.

These, with the works above, "constituted the primary object of Washington's care during the war."

To maintain them, he had incurred all the hazards of the campaign, in the previous year, through the Jerseys with a too feeble force. To maintain them without imperilling Philadelphia, were the "marchings and countermarchings," * of which he complained, of the present year between the Hudson and the Delaware. In the appointments to their command he had been most sedulous. When Heath was transferred to fill the place left vacant by the resignation of General Ward, McDougall, in whom New York had confidence, was substituted; and when he requested to be relieved, Arnold, recently elected major-general, was ordered to the command. And when Arnold sought more active service, Putnam was selected with instructions "to use every means in his power for expediting and effecting the works mentioned" in a recent joint report of Greene, Knox, McDougall, Clinton and Wayne.—"The pass through the Highlands on the west side of the river should also be attended to, lest the enemy by a coup-de-main should possess themselves of it, before a sufficient force can be assembled to oppose them."

The selection of Putnam was doubtless prompted by his supposed influence in drawing aid from Connecticut, and by his supposed value as "an executive officer." But of his fitness in a "separate" command, Washington was less sure. Hence frequent cautions in the letters addressed to him by Hamilton, who probably formed a correct estimate of him at White Plains, to interpose "effectual impediments to the avenues of approach;" that he

* Washington to Greene, May 12, 1777

"must undoubtedly expect a visit to his post," "to use every method of gaining intelligence;" indicating the consequences of their loss as "almost irremediable;" that to "prevent a *coup de main* was of an importance infinite to America." It was this that caused Washington to rejoice in Clinton's taking the command of the forts, who was urged by Hamilton in his behalf to call out adequate reinforcements to the garrison, and the army at this post.*

Nor had Washington any grounds of doubt that his orders had been obeyed, and that they were safe. As late as the tenth of September, five and twenty days before the assault, Clinton, as governor of New York, stated to the legislature, "I have also made a further draft for the protection of the exposed inhabitants of the County of Westchester, and for the defence of the posts in the Highlands; which, I have the pleasure of *assuring you, are in so respectable a state of defence*, as to promise us *security* against *any attack* in that quarter." † Upon this assurance the legislature relied.‡

On the twenty-ninth of September, Putnam advised § Clinton of intelligence of a reinforcement to the British in New York; that "the whole of their troops" were "under marching orders," and of their "probable designs against the posts in the Highlands or some part of the Counties of Westchester and Dutchess." He asked for reinforcements, and invited his "personal attention, counsel and assistance," expressing his belief that a "contrary wind" only prevented "an immediate visit." The total

* Corres. of Rev., i. 420, Aug. 9. Clinton to Washington.

† Extract from original speech on file at Albany, Sept. 10.

‡ Address of Legislature: "We feel ourselves happy in reflecting on the measures which *have been taken* for securing the important posts in the Highlands, and we should do you injustice, were we not to acknowledge your vigorous efforts in that necessary work."

§ Corresp. Rev., ii. 536, 537, 538.

forces at the post are stated to have been at this time, "eleven hundred continentals, and four hundred militia at Peekskill," a small guard at Fort Independence, and a garrison of six hundred men, militia, except a company of veteran artillerists under Lamb. Governor Clinton repaired to the forts on the western bank, and took command, aided by his brother, who was at "Fort Clinton." Nearly five days having elapsed, on the fourth of October, in the evening, Putnam again wrote Clinton, informing him of the approach of the enemy in their vessels, and excusing himself for not having previously advised him, because he "thought this movement was only to drive off cattle." Two days after, he again wrote, stating information, that the enemy had landed on the western side of the river, "betwixt King's Ferry and Dunderberg, if so, that they meant to attack Fort Montgomery by land; which, when I am sure of, I shall immediately reinforce you."

The preceding day, (the fifth of October,) the British force, under Sir Henry Clinton and General Vaughan, landed at Verplanck's Point, a few miles below Peekskill, on the same side of the river. Putnam immediately retreated among the hills. On the evening of that day, a part of the enemy re-embarked, the fleet moved up to mask King's Ferry, and early the next morning two thousand one hundred troops were landed at Stony Point. These troops moved round the Dunderberg, or thunder mountain, through the very "avenue of approach" previously indicated from head-quarters as in danger of being taken by a "COUP DE MAIN," and clambered to a point where they were obliged to separate in order to attack the forts. This point they seemed to have reached before Putnam was aware of their having landed. He discovered, as he states, a large fire at the Ferry,

which he imagined to be the store houses, upon which it was thought they only landed with a view of destroying these houses.*

Without giving any orders, positive or contingent, to reinforce Clinton, Putnam, with Parsons and his adjutant-general, proceeded to reconnoitre; and did not return to their quarters until the western forts had been attacked. A reinforcement ordered during his absence,† marched too late to afford assistance, and did not cross the river. Upon learning the approach of the enemy, after sending to Putnam for aid, two small parties were advanced to endeavor to check the separate advancing parties of the enemy. Their endeavors were ineffectual. The works were reached. A summons was given to surrender, which was refused. "About five in the afternoon," assaults were made on both forts, and, after a short defence, they were both taken by storm. A few of each of the garrisons were made prisoners, most of them with their two commanders escaped—a part, among whom was James Clinton, to the woods; others by boats across the river, of whom was the governor.

Not a little merit was claimed for this defence. Hamilton took a different view in a publication a few years after the revolution.‡ "After diligent inquiry," he wrote, "I have not been able to learn that he" (Governor Clinton) "was ever more than once in actual combat. This was at Fort Montgomery, where he commanded in person; and which, after a feeble and unskilful defence, was carried by storm. That post, strongly fortified by nature, almost inaccesible in itself, and sufficiently manned, was capable of being rendered a much more difficult morsel to the assailants than they found it to be. This, I own,

* Putnam to Washington, Oct. 8. Corresp. Rev., i. 438.

† Humphrey's Life of Putnam. ‡ Hamilton's Works, vi. 603.

was not the common idea at the time, but it is not the less true." *

Two American frigates stationed to defend the chain, one "badly manned," the other without anchor or cables to secure her, were set on fire to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. "The flames suddenly broke forth; and as every sail was set, the vessels soon became magnificent pyramids of fire. The reflection on the steep face of the opposite mountain, and the long train of ruddy light that shone upon the water for a prodigious distance, had a wonderful effect; whilst the ear was awfully filled with the continued echoes from the rocky shores, as the flames gradually reached the cannon. The whole was sublimely terminated by the explosions, which again left all to darkness." †

* Stedman differs as to the strength of Montgomery, but agrees as to the defence. "The point assailed at Fort Montgomery was not very strong from situation or works, *nor did the enemy make a very obstinate resistance*, so that the fort was carried by our troops *with little loss*, almost all the garrison, consisting of *eight hundred men*, made their escape."—i. 360. Marshall states, i. 209: "Both forts were assaulted about *five in the afternoon*. The works were defended with resolution, and were maintained until dark." As the sun sets on the sixth of October, in the latitude of New York, at 36 minutes past 5 o'clock, and the fight ended at dark, it could not have lasted more than *forty minutes*. Congress agreed to the report of a court of inquiry, "that those forts were lost, not *from any fault*, misconduct, or negligence of the commanding officers, but solely through the want of an adequate force under their command to maintain and defend them." In the "Civil War in America," by a British officer, it is stated, p. 327: "In the rear of Fort Montgomery the defences were but weak, and at this time assailable, having been left so from a supposed impracticability of an enemy advancing on this quarter. The rebels, however, were not found defenceless on this side. To considerable natural obstructions they had added others, by cutting down great quantities of trees, and disposing them in such a manner as to present a *very formidable abatis*." "Our loss was inconsiderable; not more than two hundred killed and wounded. *Seventy pieces of artillery* and valuable stores captured."

† Stedman i. 364.

Such was the catastrophe which befell the Highland posts, objects of so much care, such vast expense, such long solicitude, lost in a conflict of about forty minutes; if gallantly defended, as the enemy had no artillery, impregnable.

At this moment, Gouverneur Morris writes to Schuyler from Kingston: "By the want of men, the key of this State is in possession of the enemy. * * * Old Putnam is an old woman, and therefore much cannot be expected from him."

Putnam, in his poor exculpations to Washington, as was his wont, resorted to the fabulous. He stated that he detached a reinforcement, which was the act of Colonel Wyllis, in his absence and without his knowledge; and to relieve the picture, that the enemy were five thousand in number. Nor were these his only inaccuracies. He had the effrontery to write to Washington, in disregard of all the previous urgent monitions addressed to him from head-quarters, "I have repeatedly informed your excellency of the enemy's design against this post; but from some motive or other, you always differed with me in opinion." The next day he wrote to Gates, throwing out a slur upon the commander-in-chief, and exaggerating the defence. "The loss of Fort Montgomery has, instead of depressing the spirits of the country, animated them. So many forts and strongholds have been given up without fighting, that they began to despair, and thought our troops would not face the enemy. The few brave men that were in that fort defended it *five hours* against *at least* five thousand of the enemy." *

On the same day Sir Henry Clinton sent a dispatch

* Governor Clinton, who had seen Putnam, states, the next day, "by the lowest account, three thousand." The actual force stated by Sir Henry Clinton was 2,100.

enclosed in a silver ball to Burgoyne. "Nous y voici, and nothing between us but *gates*. I sincerely hope this little success of ours may facilitate your operations. In answer to your letter of the 28th of Sept. by C. .C, I shall only say, that I cannot presume to order, or even advise, for reasons obvious. I heartily wish you success." The miserable bearer of this missive was seized, the bullet obtained, he sentenced to the gallows.

Putnam, evacuating Forts Independence and Constitution, hastened to Fishkill beyond reach of the enemy. Hence he wrote again to Gates: "I have called a council this night, when we shall determine whether to proceed to Albany to reinforce your army, or to New York, and endeavor to possess ourselves of that post; the latter, I think, will take place."

Hamilton at this time was writing to Congress in the name of Washington:* "If General Putnam can but keep pace with their fleet in their progress up the river, I hope he will be able to frustrate their designs of relieving General Burgoyne, and that every thing will still terminate well in that quarter." Putnam clung to his favorite idea, cogent as were the opposite considerations. After stating his conviction, that the shipping were moving for Albany, he remarked: "If we were convinced that General Gates was able to oppose them, I think we ought not to lose a moment, but march immediately down to King's Bridge." He then changed his mind, and decided to march northward. Premature tidings as to Burgoyne's defeat determined him to halt after marching three miles, and again he talked of a movement towards New York, which Clinton pronounced "utterly inefficacious," and he temporarily relinquished the idea. Thus a force, increased by the influx of Connecticut militia to the number of six

* Oct. 13.

thousand men, remained at such a moment, wholly unemployed.

These occurrences were rendered of minor importance by the rapidly maturing results of the northern campaign. Grown confident by the battle at Stillwater, the Americans were harassing the enemy night and day. "I do not believe," Burgoyne states in the account of his expedition, "either officer or soldier ever slept without his clothes; or that any general officer or commander of a regiment passed a single night without being upon his legs occasionally at different hours, and constantly up before daylight."

Gates saw the advantage of time, and was unwilling to move out of his intrenchments. The Americans became impatient. "I think it my duty," Arnold wrote him, moved by the common impulse, "(which nothing shall deter me from doing) to acquaint you the army are clamorous for action. The militia (who compose a great part of the army) are already threatening to go home. One fortnight's inaction will, I make no doubt, lessen your army by sickness and desertion at least four thousand men, in which time the enemy may be reinforced, and make good their retreat. I have reason to think, from intelligence since received, that, had we improved the twentieth of September, it might have ruined the enemy. That is past; let me entreat you to improve the present time." Instead of seeking battle, Gates wrote, "I will endeavor to be ready to prevent his (Burgoyne's) good fortune, and, if possible, secure my own."

Of too gallant mettle to yield to adverse fortune without a struggle, Burgoyne, receiving no tidings from Sir Henry Clinton, his stores rapidly diminishing, resolved to risk the hazards of another engagement. His situation was becoming desperate, and a desperate effort must be made.

Having confided the guard of his camp upon the heights to Generals Hamilton and Specht, the redoubts and the plain to Gall, he selected fifteen hundred choice troops, with eight field-pieces, under Philips, Riedesel and Fraser, led by himself to attack the American left, the weakest point, hoping possibly to force a passage to Albany. As a diversion, a party of skirmishers and Indians were ordered to make a circuit through the woods, gain the rear of the Americans, and assail them at the moment of his advance in front This purpose was discovered. Morgan with his rifles passing through the woods, took a commanding position, unobserved. The troops under Poor and Learned defiled to the left, reinforced by militia, as the action became serious, and by detachments from the right. Burgoyne now formed, his artillery and grenadiers on his left, his light infantry on his right, with Fraser at the head of a detachment intended to flank the Americans, while the centre consisted of British and Hessians under Philips and Riedesel.

Morgan, supported by Dearborn's infantry, began the fight, pouring in a deadly fire on the advanced front and flank of the left wing. General Poor at this moment moved steadily upon the British artillery and grenadiers, bore them down, and, after frequent rencontres, took their pieces, and turned them upon them. Major Ackland wounded, and Williams, the commander of the artillery, were both captured. The impetuous charges upon the enemy's centre were directed by Arnold, who, without orders,* had thrown himself into the midst of the fire,

* Burgoyne's Expedition, 26: "Gates, as I have been informed, had determined to receive the attack in his lines. Arnold, who commanded on the left, foreseeing the danger of being turned, advanced without consultation of his general, and gave, instead of receiving battle. The stroke might have been fatal on his part, had he failed; but confident I am, upon minute exam-

loudly welcomed by the soldiers, and gave an infuriated character to the onset. The Hessians, who broke again and again, could not comprehend the fearless disregard of life in their enemy. Morgan's rifles were all on the alert, cutting a chasm through their opponents, and rendering relief to the centre impossible. Fraser on his gray charger, a conspicuous mark, was a victim to their fire. His infantry fell back, while Ten Broeck's men of Albany came up, and made resistance hopeless. Seeing the day lost, to cover the return of his troops to camp, which a movement of the Americans threatened to intercept, Burgoyne formed a second line, leaving his horse and artillery behind it. Arnold renewed the attack upon the left, stormed the enemy's camp, "rushing to their lines under a severe fire of grape and small arms. The post of the light infantry under Lord Balcarras, assisted by some of the line, which threw themselves, by order, into the intrenchments, was defended with great spirit." * Unable to penetrate at this point, Arnold dashed upon the right flank, pushed on to the intrenchments of the German reserve under Breyman situate en potence, a little on the rear of the line. Reaching these works, under a severe fire of grape and small arms, he was among the first to enter, leaping through a sally post, his brown horse killed, himself wounded. The Germans retreated, firing successive volleys until they had gained their tents behind the intrenchments; when, supposing the assault general, they gave one last discharge. Some retreated to the further camp, others surrendered. In this assault, Lieutenant-colonel Brooks of Massachusetts was much distinguished.

ination of the ground since, that had the other *idea been pursued, I should in a few hours have gained a position that, in spite of the enemy's numbers, would have put them in my power.*"

* Burgoyne's Expedition.

Breyman was killed, the outworks carried. An attempt to recover them failed. Brooks held them, and thus an opening upon the right and rear of the enemy was gained.

Near the close of the day, Gates awakened to a sense of the advantage obtained, and ordered Lincoln to move with the right wing and attack the enemy's left, but the darkness prevented him. This action, begun three hours after noon, ended only with the light. The Americans lay upon their arms near the enemy's lines, eager to renew the fight at break of day. At this time, orders again reached Lincoln to attempt the enemy's lines, each brigade forming a column, and marching from its own encampment. There was a simultaneous movement on the left. The enemy, on the approach of the advanced corps, after exchanging a few shots, abandoned their lines, and took post on the heights in their rear. Lincoln received a wound.* A judicious order was now given, to march a strong column to turn their right, which, if effected, would have enclosed them. At the same time, a detachment crossed the Hudson to prevent its passage, while other bodies were pushed up the river.

This decisive victory and his severe loss, left Burgoyne no choice but to retreat. Having interred General Fraser in the dusk of evening, and taken the usual precautions to conceal his retreat, Burgoyne began to move at nine of night, abandoning his hospital, baggage, and part of his supplies. Through torrents of rain he travelled his dreary way, Riedesel in the van, Philips in the rear, reaching the succeeding night his former ground at Saratoga. A party of Americans engaged in throwing up in-

* Gates, in his short report of the 12th of October, speaks of Arnold's gallantry and wound, and in commendatory terms of Lincoln, Morgan, and Dearborn.

trenchments near the line of the Fish Creek, abandoned them on his approach, and joined another party intrenched on the eastern bank of the Hudson to command its passage. Early the next day, Burgoyne occupied his former position. With a faint hope of securing a retreat, he immediately sent forward artificers under an escort to repair the road to Fort Edward, when the American army were seen on the southern heights of Fish Creek, preparing to cross it and give battle. Fearing an attack upon his camp, he recalled the escort. To pass the Hudson at once by a ford commanded by a large body of his enemy, and then attempt to escape to Fort George pursued by a superior force; or with only their arms and ammunition, and such provision as each man could carry, to march up the western bank of the river by night, crossing at Fort Edward or at an upper ford, and thus reach Fort George, were the alternatives. The former would have been an act of temerity, the latter was proposed by Riedesel at an interview with Burgoyne and Philips on the eleventh of October. No decision was made. Another council was held, at which Generals Hamilton and Gall were also present. Riedesel again urged this movement, with whom the other officers concurred.* An order was given to distribute the provisions, and to march at ten at night. At the moment of moving, a countermanding order came. Burgoyne wisely relinquished his purpose. The Americans had stationed a guard at every ford, an intrenched work had been thrown up on the elevated ground this side of Fort George, and detachments were posted to attack the enemy at whatever point they should advance.

It only remained to fortify his camp upon the high ground north of Fish Creek, and there wait the succor, his last hope, from below. Nor could he hope long to

* Life of Riedesel, ii. 174.

maintain this position. Batteries were opened upon him from the adverse banks of the Hudson and of the Fish Creek, while, on his rear, Morgan's rifles were keeping up a frequent fire. "Roaring of cannon and whistling of bullets were heard constantly by day and night. The men lay continually upon their arms, and were cannonaded in every part, even rifle shot and grape shot came into all parts of the line." *

Amid his suffering and despairing army, Burgoyne again called a council of war, submitted his views, and proposed as a last resort, in case the enemy, by extending their left, should leave their rear open, to march rapidly to Albany. This council was held on the twelfth. Scouts having reported the impracticability of either expedient, the next day a fuller council was held, in order that if a capitulation were agreed upon, it should be "the act of the army as well as of the general." † The council resolved with one voice, that, "their present situation justified a capitulation upon honorable terms."

A negotiation was at once opened. Gates required an unconditional surrender as prisoners of war. This was rejected. He then proposed they should ground their arms in their encampments and be marched towards Bennington. He was answered that "sooner than consent to this, they will rush on the enemy determined to take no quarter." Gates receded, and it was finally agreed, that the British troops "march out of their camp with their artillery, and the honors of war to the verge of the river," where their arms, piled by command of their own officers, and their artillery were to be left; a free passage to Great Britain, to be granted on condition of not serving in North America. On the seventeenth of October, the capitulation was signed, and with much delicacy Gates held his

* Burgoyne's Expedition. Appendix, 93. † Ibid, p. 101.

troops within his lines, Wilkinson, the adjutant-general, being the only American in view at the moment of surrender. The British troops made prisoners were in number five thousand seven hundred and fifty men, with a train of artillery, many thousand stand of arms, clothing and military stores. The Americans were, exclusive of sick and absent, nearly double in number—ten thousand five hundred and fifty men.

Their arms surrendered, the captured army were formed in line. The light infantry in front, escorted by a company of American dragoons, preceded by two mounted officers, bearing the American flag. They passed through the long line of the victors until they reached the marquee of Gates. He came out accompanied by Burgoyne—a large, robust soldier—his countenance rough and hard, his figure handsome, his air noble. Here, in the presence of the two armies, he delivered his sword to Gates, of smaller stature and not imposing mien, who received it courteously.

"While they marched down their front," wrote a foreign officer, "not a single man exhibited any rancor, hatred, or sign of scorn; or uttered a word of exultation, or malicious passion. They behaved as if paraded to give us a mark of honor. When passing before the tent of General Gates, he obligingly invited the British generals and commanders of regiments to enter. Refreshments of all kinds were placed before them. Gates is a man between fifty and sixty years of age, wears his own hair, gray and thin, and cut round his head. He also wears spectacles, being short-sighted."

The military air of the Americans filled this foreigner with surprise. "In regard of stature and beauty of the male population, British America excels nearly all the European countries. The whole people have natural

talents for warfare, and would make excellent soldiers." * Their courage, endurance, and talent for war were their chief boast, for nothing could be more incomplete and incongruous than their equipments. The men chiefly in their working apparel, with which they had left their fields, the officers in clothes of various colors, ill-chosen, ill-made, some with wigs, some without, an aggregate of plain, colonial, unprovided, fighting yeomen.†

Nor did the Hessians furnish a less curious spectacle. "A towering brass fronted cap; moustaches colored with the same material that colored his shoes, his hair plastered with tallow and flour, and tightly drawn into a long appendage reaching from the back of his head to his waist; his blue uniform almost covered by the broad belts sustaining his cartouch box, his brass-hilted sword and his bayonet; a yellow waistcoat with flaps, and yellow breeches were met at the knees with black gaiters; thus heavily equipped, he moved, an automaton, and received the command or cane of his officer." ‡

The dismounted dragoons, with their massive caps and heavy accoutrements and foot-long spurs, tramping through the mire—their persons unclean, with unclean animals in their train §—a black, grisly bear growling at his tangled chain, foxes cunningly peering from the baggage wagons, a young raccoon under the arm of a sharpshooter, or a tamed deer tripping along—their only tro-

* Letter dated Nov. 15, 1777. Cambridge, in Schloesser's Annalise, No. 60, and Staats Anzieger, No. 72. Gottingen.

† "Brown coats, with green facings and cuffs, white lining, and silver laces; plenty of gray, with buff facings and cuffs. The brigadiers and generals are wearing particularly uniforms and ribbons, lying over the waistcoats, in the fashion in which ribbons with orders are used. The colonels and other commissioned officers are mainly in their every-day clothes. They carried flags with emblems and mottoes, many of which are very little flattering to us."

‡ Dunlap, 45.

§ Expedition, 221.

phies. Oddly-dressed, gypsy-featured women followed in the train, unable to restrain their curses, cries, and jargon of amazement, curses yet often returned by the American farmer, as he surveys the fruit of his long toil wasted by an attendant of their advent—the "Hessian fly."

Numbers of lithe muscular Indians with a few squalid squaws, under strong guard to protect them from the exasperated militia, were seen, doubtless expecting with gloomy firmness the fagot and the torture they would have themselves employed.

Nor was there wanting in this captured army aught to deepen the dark side of war. Women of refined taste and culture, delicate in all the delicacies of their sex, mothers with young children who had followed their husbands to the field. Among these were Lady Harriet Ackland, who had passed in an open boat amid a pelting storm into the hostile camp, to attend her wounded husband; and the Baroness Riedesel, who, amid the dead, the dying and the maimed, immured in a cellar penetrated by shot, lived to receive and to record the hospitality of Schuyler. Taking her children in his arms as she alighted from her calash, he led her to the marquee of Gates, where the general officers were to dine. Observing, that she might feel embarrassed as the only lady in so large a circle, he invited her to his tent to partake of his frugal meal, and then requested her to repair to his residence at Albany as her temporary abode. Her husband approving, she proceeded there, and "was loaded with kindness." *

Schuyler was also among the first to approach Burgoyne, to whom he gave a similar invitation. "You show me great kindness," said Burgoyne, "though I have done you much injury." "That was the fate of war," Schuy-

* Lady Riedesel's Memoir.

ler answered, "let us say no more about it."* "He did more," Burgoyne stated in the House of Commons, "he sent an aide-de-camp to conduct me to Albany, in order, as he expressed it, to procure better quarters than a stranger might be able to find. That gentleman conducted me to a very elegant house, and, to my great surprise, presented me to Mrs. Schuyler and her family. In that house I remained during my whole stay in Albany, with a table of more than twenty covers for me and my friends, and every other demonstration of hospitality."

In the hope of relieving Burgoyne by a diversion, the day before the capitulation was signed, General Vaughan, in command of a detachment, finding no obstacles from the water guard near the Highland fortresses, sailed up the Hudson. Having burned the Continental village, at which large stores were collected, he proceeded towards Kingston, the seat of the New York government, where some works had been raised for its protection, whither Governor Clinton was also moving, by way of the Walkill, with a small body of continentals, some militia, and seven field-pieces. Vaughan landed without serious interruption, and destroyed the town. The seventeenth of October Clinton writes to Gates: "Yesterday afternoon about four o'clock, the enemy took possession and burned the town of Kingston. For want of a proper number of troops no effectual resistance could be made." Again he wrote him, stating that he had represented to Putnam in strong terms the situation of that part of the country, thinly inhabited, the interior unsettled, and separated from assistance by a chain of mountains. "In consequence of which representation he agreed to let me have three

* To prevent their being occupied by the Americans, and thus check his proposed crossing the Hudson, Burgoyne had burned Schuyler's summer residence, mills, and properties of considerable value.

thousand men of the eastern militia, should they come in as he expected they would, of which number, however, he hath not sent four hundred. Kingston has been destroyed merely because I have been so deceived in my expectations of assistance that it was impossible to take measures for its security." "Governor Clinton," it is stated,* "was two hours too late. He beheld the flames from a distance, and having brought with him the spy, the bearer of the silver bullet, he hanged him in an apple tree in sight of the burning village."

Hamilton, several years after, published a comment on this affair. "Those who are best acquainted with the particulars of the burning of Esopus, assert that his excellency was culpably deficient in exertion on that occasion. The fact seems to have been, that a large body of men remained unemployed in the vicinity, under his direction, while the descent of the enemy was made with little or no opposition; and there is room to suppose, that, if a better countenance had been kept up, the evil might have been prevented." †

Kingston burned, and the river dwellings of gentry conspicuous in the revolution wasted, Vaughan, meeting intelligence of the capture of Burgoyne, returned unmolested down the Hudson, Fort Montgomery having been demolished.

Putnam, with the large force under his command swollen by detachments from Gates, seemed to feel that something must be attempted by him to compensate for the past. On the last day of October he convened a council of his officers. By this council it was unanimously decided, that four thousand men should move down on the west side of the Hudson and take post at Haverstraw, a few miles below King's Ferry; and that leaving a

* Irving's Washington, iii. 251. † Hamilton's Works, vi. 603.

thousand in the Highlands, the remainder should proceed without delay to King's Bridge with a view to an attempt upon New York. Gates dissuaded it as an empty scheme.

The barbarous destruction of private property in this expedition of General Vaughan kindled the indignation, not merely of America, but of the people of England. The only act of like nature by way of retaliation, committed by an officer of the continental army, was the act of Putnam. He, soon after, caused the private dwelling of General Delancey, specially offensive as a partisan leader, to be burned to the ground.*

* Humphrey's Life of Putnam, 151

CHAPTER XII.

While Howe had drawn his army within his lines near Philadelphia, Washington, daily weakened by the departure of the militia, was looking intently for tidings from Saratoga. Rumors came of successes, but until the twenty-fifth of October, no authentic intelligence was received of the capitulation of Burgoyne, and this came through an indirect channel. Not a line was received by him from Gates.

Eager to meet the enemy with an equal force of regulars which he never before had, Washington called a council of war. They met on the twenty-ninth of October, five major-generals and ten brigadiers. Hamilton was present, and drew up the minute of their proceedings. The enemy's force was stated to be ten thousand men, rank and file, fit for duty. The American, exclusive of the garrisons on the river forts, three hundred continentals at Mifflin, and three hundred and fifty at Red Bank, and five hundred militia towards Chester, amounted to eleven thousand, of whom two thousand seven hundred were militia, soon to be reduced to eight hundred by the expiration of their term of service. The calls upon Pennsylvania and New Jersey for aid were mentioned, and the results under Gates, Putnam and Clinton,

stated. Questions were then propounded as to the eligibility of attacking the enemy; if not eligible, what ground they should take until forced by the season from the field. Where then should be the cantonment? How the enemy was to be prevented drawing supplies for the winter; and whether any and what succors could, with propriety, be drawn from the northern army. Other questions of army regulations and economy were submitted. The conclusion was, that the enemy ought not to be then attacked; a present position for the army was indicated; the river garrisons to be reinforced; and succors to be drawn from the northern army, to consist of twenty regiments, fifteen of Massachusetts, three of New Hampshire, and Lee's and Jackson's. Morgan was on his way. A mission of one of Washington's aides to Gates was also advised.

Congress were formally apprised of this opinion, with the reasons for it, in a letter by Hamilton in the name of the commander-in-chief, and were informed that he had sent Colonel Hamilton to General Gates, "to give him a just representation of things, and to explain to him the expediency of our receiving the reinforcements which have been determined necessary, if they will not interfere with and frustrate any important plans he may have formed. Indeed, I cannot conceive that there is any other object now remaining that demands our attention and most vigorous efforts so much as the destruction of the enemy in this quarter. Should we be able to effect this, we shall have little to fear in future." A letter was immediately addressed to Gates by Washington, also from the pen of Hamilton, in which, after congratulating him upon his success, as "an event that does the highest honor to the American arms," and expressing his "regret that a matter of such magnitude should have reached him by report

only, or through the channel of letters not bearing that authenticity, which the importance of it required, and which it would have received by a line under your signature, stating the simple fact," he observed: "Our affairs having happily terminated at the northward, I have, by the advice of my general officers, sent Colonel Hamilton, one of my aides, to lay before you a full state of our situation, and that of the enemy in this quarter. He is well informed upon the subject, and will deliver my sentiments upon the plan of operations that is become necessary to be pursued. I think it improper to enter into a particular detail, not being well advised how matters are circumstanced on the North River, and fearing that by some accident my letter might miscarry. From Colonel Hamilton you will have a clear and comprehensive view of things, and I persuade myself you will do all in your power to facilitate the objects I have in contemplation."

Hamilton departed under instructions drawn by himself. "It having been judged expedient by the members of a council of war held yesterday, that one of the gentlemen of my family should be sent to General Gates, in order to lay before him the state of the army and the situation of the enemy, and to point out to him the many happy consequences that will accrue from an immediate reinforcement being sent from the northern army, I have thought it proper to appoint you to that duty, and desire that you will immediately set out for Albany, at which place, or in the neighborhood, I imagine you will find General Gates.

"You are so fully acquainted with the principal points on which you are sent, namely, the state of our army and the situation of the enemy, that I shall not enlarge on those heads. What you are chiefly to attend to, is to point out, in the clearest and fullest manner, to General

Gates, the absolute necessity that there is for his detaching a very considerable part of the army at present under his command to the reinforcemeat of this; a measure that will in all probability reduce General Howe to the same situation in which General Burgoyne now is, should he attempt to remain in Philadelphia without being able to remove the obstructions in the Delaware, and open a free communication with his shipping. The force which the members of the council of war judge it safe and expedient to draw down at present, are, the three New Hampshire and fifteen Massachusetts regiments, with Lee's and Jackson's, two of the sixteen, additional. But it is more than probable that General Gates may have detained part of those troops to the reduction of Ticonderoga, should the enemy not have evacuated it, or to the garrisoning of it. If they should, in that case the reinforcement will be according to circumstances; but, if possible, let it be made up to the same number out of other corps. If, upon your meeting with General Gates, you should find that he intends, in consequence of his success, to employ the troops under his command upon some expedition, by the prosecution of which the common cause will be more benefited than by their being sent down to reinforce this army, it is not my wish to give any interruption to the plan. But if he should have nothing more in contemplation than those particular objects which I have mentioned to you, and which it is unnecessary to commit to paper, in that case you are to inform him that it is my desire that the reinforcements before mentioned, or such part of them as can be safely spared, be immediately put in motion to join the army.

"I have understood that General Gates has already detached Nixon's and Glover's brigades to join General Putnam; and General Dickinson informs me, Sir Henry Clin-

ton has come down the river with his whole force; if this be a fact, you are to desire General Putnam to send the two brigades forward with the greatest expedition, as there can be no occasion for them there.

"I expect you will meet Colonel Morgan's corps upon their way down; if you do, let them know how essential their services are to us, and desire the colonel or commanding officer to hasten their march as much as is consistent with the health of the men after their late fatigues.

"P. S. I ordered the detachment belonging to General McDougall's division to come forward. If you meet them, direct those belonging to Greene's, Angel's, Chandler's, and Duryee's regiments not to cross the Delaware, but to proceed to Red Bank."

Colonel Hamilton proceeded, by way of New Windsor, to Fishkill, the head-quarters of General Putnam, whence, on the second of November, he wrote to Washington: "I lodged last night in the neighhorhood of New Windsor. This morning early I met Colonel Morgan with his corps, about a mile from it, in march for head-quarters. I told him the necessity of making all the despatch he could, so as not to fatigue his men too much, which he has promised to do.

"I understood from Colonel Morgan, that all the northern army were marching down on both sides the river, and would, probably, be to-morrow at New Windsor and this place; and that General Putnam had held a council for the general disposition of them, in which it was resolved to send you four thousand men, and to keep the rest on this side the river. I came here in expectation that matters were in such a train as to enable me to accomplish my errand without going any farther unless it should be to hasten the troops that were on their march; but on my arrival, I learned from Mr. Hughes, an aide-

de-camp of General Gates, that the following disposition of the northern army had taken place.

"Generals Patterson's, Glover's, and Nixon's brigades, and Colonel Warner's mountain boys, to remain in and about Albany,—barracks building for them. General Poor's brigade marching down this side of the river to join General Putnam, will be here probably to-morrow. General Learned's brigade, Morgan's corps, Warner's brigade of Massachusetts militia, and some regiments of New York militia, on their march on the west side of the river.

"I have directed General Putnam, in your name, to send forward with all despatch to join you, the two continental brigades and Warner's militia brigade; this last is to serve till the latter end of this month. Your instructions did not comprehend any militia, but as there are certain accounts here that most of the troops from New York are gone to reinforce General Howe, and as so large a proportion of continental troops have been detained at Albany, I concluded you would not disapprove of a measure calculated to strengthen you, though but for a small time, and have ventured to adopt it on that presumption.

"Being informed by General Putnam, that General Wynds, with seven hundred Jersey militia, was at King's Ferry, with intention to cross to Peekskill, I prevailed upon him to relinquish that idea, and send off an immediate order for them to march towards Red Bank. It is possible, however, unless your excellency supports this order by an application from yourself, he may march his men home, instead of marching them to the place he has been directed to repair to.

"Neither Lee's, Jackson's regiments, nor the detachments belonging to General McDougall's division, have yet marched. I have urged their being sent, and an order

has been despatched for their instantly proceeding. Colonel Hughes is pressing some fresh horses for me. The moment they are ready, I shall recross the river in order to fall in with the troops on the other side, and make all the haste I can to Albany to get the three brigades there sent forward.

"Will your excellency permit me to observe, that I have some doubts, under present circumstances and appearances, of the propriety of leaving the regiments proposed to be left in this quarter? But if my doubts on this subject were stronger than they are, I am forbid, by the sense of council, from interfering in the matter.

"General Poor's brigade is just arrived here; they will proceed to join you with all expedition. So strongly am I impressed with the importance of endeavoring to crush Mr. Howe, that I am apt to think it would be advisable to draw off all the continental troops. Had this been determined on, General Warner's sixteen hundred militia might have been left here."

On the fourth, Hamilton arrived at Albany, and had an interview with Gates; the result is stated in a letter to Washington:

"I arrived here yesterday at noon, and waited upon General Gates immediately on the business of my mission, but was sorry to find his ideas did not correspond with yours, for drawing off the number of troops you directed. I used every argument in my power to convince him of the propriety of the measure, but he was inflexible in the opinion that two brigades, at least, of continental troops should remain in and near this place. His reasons were, that the intelligence of Sir Henry Clinton's having gone to join Howe was not sufficiently authenticated to put it out of doubt; that there was, therefore, a possibility of his returning up the river, which might expose the

finest arsenal in America (as he calls the one here), to destruction, should this place be left so bare of troops as I proposed, and that the want of conveniences and the difficulty of the roads would make it impossible to remove artillery and stores for a considerable time; that the New England States would be left open to the depredations and ravages of the enemy; that it would put it out of his power to enterprise any thing against Ticonderoga, which he thinks might be done in the winter, and which he considers it of importance to undertake.

"The force of these reasons did by no means strike me; and I did every thing in my power to show they were unsubstantial; but all I could effect was to have one brigade despatched in addition to those already marched. I found myself infinitely embarrassed, and was at a loss how to act. I felt the importance of strengthening you as much as possible; but on the other hand, I found insuperable inconveniences in acting diametrically opposite to the opinion of a gentleman whose successes have raised him to the highest importance.

"General Gates has won the entire confidence of the Eastern States. If disposed to do it, by addressing himself to the prejudices of the people, he would find no difficulty to render a measure odious, which, it might be said with plausibility enough to be believed, was calculated to expose them to unnecessary dangers, notwithstanding their exertions during the campaign had given them the fullest title to repose and security. General Gates has influence and interest elsewhere; he might use it, if he pleased, to discredit the measure there also. On the whole, it appeared to me dangerous to insist on sending more troops from hence, while General Gates appeared so warmly opposed to it. Should any accident or inconvenience happen in consequence of it, there would be too

fair a pretext for censure, and many people are too well disposed to lay hold of it. At any rate, it might be considered as using him ill, to take a step so contrary to his judgment in a case of this nature. These considerations, and others which I shall be more explicit in when I have the pleasure of seeing you, determined me not to insist upon sending either of the other brigades remaining here. I am afraid what I have done may not meet with your approbation, as not being perhaps fully warranted by your instructions; but I ventured to do what I thought right, hoping that at least the goodness of my intention will excuse the error of my judgment.

"I was induced to this relaxation the more readily, as I had directed to be sent on two thousand militia which were not expected by you, and a thousand continental troops out of those proposed to be left with General Putnam, which I have written to him, since I found how matters were circumstanced here, to forward to you with all despatch. I did this for several reasons:—because your reinforcement would be more expeditious from that place than from this; because two thousand continental troops at Peekskill will not be wanted in its present circumstances, especially as it was really necessary to have a body of continental troops at this place for the security of the valuable stores here, and I should not, if I had my wish, think it expedient to draw off more than two of the three brigades now here.

"This being the case, one of the ends you proposed to be answered, by leaving the ten regiments with General Putnam, will be equally answered by the troops here, I mean that of covering and fortifying the Eastern States; and one thousand continental troops in addition to the militia collected and that may be collected here, will be sufficient in the Highlands for covering the country down

that way, and carrying on the works necessary to be raised for the defence of the river.

"The troops gone and going to reinforce you, are near five thousand rank and file continental troops, and two thousand five hundred Massachusetts and New Hampshire militia. These, and the seven hundred Jersey militia, will be a larger reinforcement than you expected, though not quite an equal number of continental troops, nor exactly in the way directed. General Lincoln tells me the militia are very excellent, and though their times will be out by the last of this month, you will be able, if you think proper, to order the troops still remaining here to join you by the time their term of service expires.

"I cannot forbear being uneasy lest my conduct should prove displeasing to you, but I have done what, considering all circumstances, appeared to me most eligible and prudent. Vessels are preparing to carry the brigade to New Windsor, which will embark this evening. I shall, this afternoon, set out on my return to camp, and on my way shall endeavor to hasten the troops forward."

Disappointed in the orders issued by Gates, Hamilton, in pursuance of the requisition of the commander-in-chief, addressed him on the fifth of November, prior to his departure from Albany, in the following decisive terms:

"By inquiry, I have learned that General Patterson's brigade, which is the one you propose to send, is by far the weakest of the three now here, and does not consist of more than about six hundred rank and file fit for duty. It is true, that there is a militia regiment with it of about two hundred, but the time of service for which this regiment is engaged is so near expiring, that it would be past by the time the men could arrive at their destination.

"Under these circumstances, I cannot consider it

either as compatible with the good of the service, or my instructions from his excellency General Washington, to consent that that brigade be selected from the three to go to him, but I am under the necessity of desiring, by virtue of my orders from him, that one of the others be substituted instead of this, either General Nixon's or General Glover's, and that you will be pleased to give immediate orders for its embarkation.

"Knowing that General Washington wished me to pay the greatest deference to your judgment, I ventured so far to deviate from the instructions he gave me, as to consent, in compliance with your opinion, that two brigades should remain here instead of one. At the same time, permit me to observe, that I am not myself sensible of the expediency of keeping more than one, with the detached regiments in the neighborhood of this place, and that my ideas coincide with those gentlemen whom I have consulted on the occasion, whose judgment I have much more reliance upon than on my own, and who must be supposed to have a thorough knowledge of all the circumstances. Their opinion is, that one brigade and the regiments before mentioned would amply answer the purposes of this post. When I preferred your opinion to other considerations, I did not imagine you would pitch upon a brigade little more than half as large as the others, and finding this to be the case, I indispensably owe it to my duty to desire, in his excellency's name, that another may go instead of the one intended, and without loss of time. As it may be conducive to despatch, to send Glover's brigade; if agreeable to you, you will give orders accordingly."

Upon the receipt of this letter, Gates gave the required order, and soon after wrote to Washington, stating his reasons for not having readily complied with the

requisition made by Hamilton. These were,—his apprehension that the force at Peekskill could not prevent the enemy from destroying the city of Albany and the arsenal; and his entire aversion to send more than one brigade, lest every good effect of the ruin of Burgoyne's army should be totally lost by the possession of that town!

A letter from the head of Gates' staff* written at this time from Albany shows the prevailing feeling: "Yesterday arrived in town Colonel Hamilton. General Glover's brigade, in addition to others, are under orders. I hope they will be able to *drive Mr. Howe*, when the *whole continent* are collected." Hamilton, to make up the apprehended deficiency, sent instantly an express to Putnam with an order to send forward a thousand more continental troops than he had previously ordered. Putnam wrote to Washington: "This will leave me with about three hundred continental troops, and no militia except those whose times are out the first of December, to cover all this distressed country. I do not think I can justify myself in this without first acquainting you, and if I then have your excellency's orders, I will, with pleasure, immediately and promptly comply with them."

Having concluded his mission to Gates, Hamilton hastened to New Windsor, and finding Putnam's indisposition to send forward the required reinforcement, he wrote him this emphatic order on the ninth: "I cannot forbear confessing that I am astonished and alarmed beyond measure, to find that all his excellency's views have been hitherto frustrated, and that no single step of those I mentioned to you has been taken to afford him the aid he absolutely stands in need of, and by delaying which, the cause of America is put to the utmost conceivable hazard.

* J. Trumbull, jr., to Gov. Trumbull, Nov. 6, 1777.

"I so fully explained to you the general's situation, that I could not entertain a doubt that you would make it the first object of your attention to reinforce him with that speed the exigency of affairs demanded; but I am sorry to say, he will have too much reason to think other objects, in comparison with that, insignificant, have been uppermost. I speak freely and emphatically, because I tremble at the consequences of the delay that has happened. General Clinton's reinforcement is probably by this time with Mr. Howe. This will give him a decisive superiority over our army. What may be the issue of such a state of things, I leave to the feelings of every friend to his country, capable of foreseeing consequences. My expressions may perhaps have more warmth than is altogether proper; but they proceed from the overflowing of my heart, in a matter where I conceive this continent essentially interested. I wrote to you from Albany, and desired you would send a thousand continental troops of those first proposed to be left with you. This, I understand, has not been done. How the non-compliance can be answered to General Washington, you can best determine.

"I now, sir, in the most explicit terms, by his excellency's authority, give it as a positive order from him, that all the continental troops under your command may be immediately marched to King's Ferry, there to cross the river, and hasten to reinforce the army under him.

"The Massachusetts militia are to be detained instead of them, until the troops coming from the northward arrive. When they do, they will replace, as far as I am instructed, the troops you shall send away in consequence of this requisition. The general's idea of keeping troops this way does not extend farther than covering the country from any little irruptions of small parties, and carrying

on the works necessary for the security of the river. As to attacking New York, that he thinks ought to be out of the question at present. If men could be spared from the other really necessary objects, he would have no objections to attempting a diversion by way of New York, but nothing farther.

"As the times of the Massachusetts and New Hampshire militia will soon expire, it will be proper to call in time for a reinforcement from Connecticut. Governor Clinton will do all in his power to promote objects in which the State he commands in is so immediately concerned. Generals Glover's and Patterson's brigades are on their way down. The number of continental troops necessary for this post will be furnished out of them.

"I cannot but have the fullest confidence you will use your utmost exertions to execute the business of this letter; and I am with great respect, sir, your most obedient servant."

The next day he wrote to Washington:

"I arrived here last night from Albany. Having given General Gates a little time to recollect himself, I renewed my remonstrance on the necessity and propriety of sending you more than one brigade of the three he had detained with him, and finally prevailed upon him to give orders for Glover's, in addition to Patterson's brigade, to march this way.

"As it was thought conducive to expedition to send the troops by water as far as it could be done, I procured all the vessels that could be had at Albany fit for the purpose, but could not get more than sufficient to take Patterson's brigade. It was embarked the 7th instant, but the wind has been contrary; they must probably be here to-day. General Glover's brigade marched at the same time, on the east side of the river, the roads being much

better than on this side. I am at this moment informed, that one sloop with a part of Patterson's has arrived, and that the others are in sight. They will immediately proceed by water to King's Ferry, and thence take the shortest route.

"I am pained beyond expression to inform your excellency that on my arrival here, I find every thing has been neglected and deranged by General Putnam, and that the two brigades, Poor's and Learned's, still remain here and on the other side of the river at Fishkill. Colonel Warner's militia, I am told, have been drawn to Peekskill, to aid in an expedition against New York, which it seems is, at this time, the hobby-horse with General Putnam. Not the least attention has been paid to my order in your name for a detachment of one thousand men from the troops hitherto stationed at this post. Every thing is sacrificed to the whim of taking New York.

"The two brigades of Poor and Learned, it appears, would not march for want of money and necessaries; several of the regiments having received no pay for six or eight months past. There has been a high mutiny among the former on this account, in which a captain killed a man, and was himself shot by his comrade. These difficulties, for want of proper management, have stopped the troops from proceeding. Governor Clinton has been the only man who has done any thing towards removing them, but for want of General Putnam's co-operation, has not been able to effect it. He has only been able to prevail with Learned's brigade to agree to march to Goshen, in hopes by getting them once on the go, to induce them to continue their march. On coming here, I immediately sent for Colonel Bailey, who now commands Learned's brigade, and persuaded him to engage to carry the brigade on to head-quarters as fast as possible. This

he expects to effect by means of five or six thousand dollars, which Governor Clinton was kind enough to borrow for me, and which Colonel Bailey thinks will keep the men in good humor till they join you. They marched this morning towards Goshen.

"I shall, as soon as possible, see General Poor, and do every thing in my power to get him along, and hope I shall be able to succeed.

"The plan I before laid having been totally deranged, a new one has become necessary. It is now too late to send Warner's militia; by the time they reached you. their term of service would be out. The motive for sending them, which was to give you a speedy reinforcement, has, by the past delay, been superseded.

"By Governor Clinton's advice, I have sent an order in the most emphatical terms to General Putnam, immediately to despatch all the continental troops under him to your assistance, and to detain the militia instead of them.

"My opinion is, that the only present use for troops in this quarter is, to protect the country from the depredations of little plundering parties, and for carrying on the works necessary for the defence of the river. Nothing more ought to be thought of. 'Tis only wasting time and misapplying men to employ them in a suicidal parade against New York,—for in this it will undoubtedly terminate. New York is no object, if it could be taken, and to take it would require more men than could be spared from more substantial purposes. Governor Clinton's ideas coincide with mine. He thinks that there is no need of more continental troops here than a few to give a spur to the militia in working upon the fortifications. In pursuance of this, I have given the directions before mentioned. If General Putnam attends to them, the troops under him

may be with you nearly as early as any of the others, (though he has unluckily marched them down to Tarrytown,) and General Glover's brigade, when it gets up, will be more than sufficient to answer the true end of this post.

"If your excellency agrees with me in opinion, it will be well to send instant directions to General Putnam to pursue the object I have mentioned, for I doubt whether he will attend to any thing I shall say, notwithstanding it comes in the shape of a positive order. I fear unless you interpose, the works here will go on so feebly for want of men, that they will not be completed in time; whereas, it appears to me of the greatest importance they should be pushed with the utmost vigor. Governor Clinton will do every thing in his power. I wish General Putnam was recalled from the command of this post, and Governor Clinton would accept it:—the blunders and caprices of the former are endless. Believe me, sir, nobody can be more impressed with the importance of forwarding the reinforcements coming to you with all speed, nor could any body have endeavored to promote it more than I have done; but the *ignorance* of some, and the *design* of others, have been almost insuperable obstacles. I am very unwell, but I shall not spare myself to get things immediately in a proper train, and for that purpose intend, unless I receive other orders from you, to continue with the troops in the progress of their march. As soon as I get General Poor's brigade in march, I shall proceed to General Putnam's at Peekskill."

Two days after he again wrote to Washington: "I have been detained here these two days by a fever and violent rheumatic pains throughout my body. This has prevented my being active in person for promoting the purposes of my errand, but I have taken every other

method in my power, in which Governor Clinton has obligingly given me all the aid he could. In answer to my pressing application to General Poor for the immediate marching of his brigade, I was told that they were under an operation for the itch, which made it impossible for them to proceed, till the effects of it were over. By a letter, however, of yesterday, General Poor* informs me he would certainly march this morning. I must do him the justice to say he appears solicitous to join you, and that I believe the past delay is not owing to any fault of his, but is wholly chargeable on General Putnam. Indeed, sir, I owe it to the service to say, that every part of this gentleman's conduct is marked with blunder and negligence, and gives general disgust.

"Parsons' brigade will join you, I hope, in five or six days from this; Learned's brigade may do the same; Poor's will, I am persuaded, make all the haste they can for the future, and Glover's may be expected at Fishkill to-night, whence they will be pushed forward as fast as I can have any influence to make them go; but I am sorry to say, the disposition for marching, in the officers and men, does not keep pace with my wishes or the exigency of the occasion. They have unfortunately imbibed an idea that they have done their part of the business of the campaign, and are now entitled to repose. This, and the want of pay, makes them averse to a long march at this advanced season.

"* * * * In a letter from General Putnam, just now received by Governor Clinton, he appears to have been the 10th instant at King's Street, at the White Plains. I have had no answer to my last applications. The ene-

* This gentleman died 9th September, 1780. Washington says of him,—"an officer of distinguished merit, who, as a citizen and a soldier, had every claim to the esteem of his country."

my appear to have stripped New York very bare. The people there, that is the tories, are in a great fright: this adds to my anxiety that the reinforcements from this quarter to you are not in greater forwardness and more considerable.

"I have written to General Gates, informing him of the accounts of the situation of New York with respect to troops, and the probability of the force gone to Howe being greater than was at first expected, to try if this will not *extort* from him a farther reinforcement. I don't, however, expect much from him, as he pretends to have in view an expedition against Ticonderoga, to be undertaken in the winter, and he knows that under the sanction of this idea, calculated to catch the eastern people, he may, without censure, retain the troops; and as I shall be under the necessity of speaking plainly to you when I have the pleasure of seeing you, I shall not hesitate to say, I doubt whether you would have had a man from the northern army if the whole could have been kept at Albany with any decency. Perhaps you will think me blamable in not having exercised the powers you gave me, and given a positive order. Perhaps I have been so; but deliberately weighing all circumstances, I did not, and do not think it advisable to do it."

Hamilton the same day crossed the river to Fishkill, in order to have another interview with Putnam, whence he wrote a second letter to Gates:

"Ever since my arrival in this quarter, I have been endeavoring to collect the best idea I could of the state of things in New York, in order the better to form a judgment of the probable reinforcement gone to General Howe. On the whole, this is a fact well ascertained, that New York has been stripped as bare as possible; that in consequence of this, the few troops there and the inhab-

itants are under so strong apprehensions of an attack, as almost to amount to a panic; that to supply the deficiency of men, every effort is making to excite the citizens to arms for the defence of the city. For this purpose the public papers are full of addresses to them, that plainly speak the apprehensions prevailing on the occasion.

"Hence I infer that a formidable force is gone to General Howe. The calculations made by those who have had the best opportunities of judging, carry the number from six to seven thousand. If so, the number gone and going to General Washington is far inferior,—five thousand at the utmost. The militia were all detained by General Putnam, till it became too late to send them.

"The state of things I gave you when I had the pleasure of seeing you, was, to the best of my judgment, sacredly true. I give you the present information, that you may decide whether any farther succor can with propriety come from you.

"The fleet, with the troops on board, sailed out of the Hook the fifth instant. This circumstance demonstrates, beyond a possibility of doubt, that it is General Howe's fixed intention to endeavor to hold Philadelphia at all hazards, and removes all danger of any farther operations up the North River this winter; otherwise Sir Henry Clinton's movement at this advanced season is altogether inexplicable.

"If you can with propriety afford any farther assistance, the most expeditious mode of conveying it will be to acquaint General Putnam of it, that he may send on the troops with him, to be replaced by them. You, sir, best know the uses to which the troops with you are to be applied, and will determine accordingly. I am certain it is not his excellency's wish to frustrate any plan you may have in view for the benefit of the service, so far as

it can possibly be avoided, consistent with a due attention to more important objects."

He proceeded through the Highlands to Peekskill, where, becoming seriously indisposed, he addressed a letter to General Washington, dated the fifteenth of November:

"I arrived at this place last night, and unfortunately find myself unable to proceed any farther. Imagining I had gotten the better of my complaint which confined me at Governor Clinton's, and anxious to be about attending to the march of the troops, the day before yesterday I crossed the ferry, in order to fall in with General Glover's brigade, which was on its march from Poughkeepsie to Fishkill. I did not, however, see it myself, but received a letter from Colonel Shepherd, who commands the brigade, informing me he would be last night at Fishkill, and this night at King's Ferry. Wagons, &c. are provided on the other side for his accommodation, so that there need be no delay but what is voluntary; and I believe Colonel Shepherd is as well disposed as could be wished to hasten his march. General Poor's brigade crossed the ferry the day before yesterday. Two York regiments, Cortland's and Livingston's, are with them: they were unwilling to be separated from the brigade, and the brigade from them. General Putnam was unwilling to keep them with him, and if he had consented to do it, the regiments to replace them would not join you six days as soon as these. The troops now remaining with General Putnam, will amount to about the number you intended, though they are not exactly the same. He has detached Colonel Charles Webb's regiment to you. He *says* the troops with him are not in a condition to march, being destitute of shoes, stockings, and other necessaries; but I believe the true reasons of his being unwilling to pursue the mode pointed

out by you, were his aversion to the York troops, and his desire to retain General Parsons with him."

Exhausted by his exertions, and suffering under severe indisposition, he was prevented rejoining the army until a short time before it entered into winter quarters at Valley Forge. While anxiously waiting his recovery, in the expectation of participating in the decisive blow which he still cherished the hope might be given to the enemy, he had the gratification of receiving a letter from General Washington, of the same date with the preceding.

"Dear Sir,—I have duly received your several favors from the time you left me to that of the twelfth instant. I approve entirely of all the steps you have taken, and have only to wish that the exertions of those you have had to deal with, had kept pace with your zeal and good intentions. I hope your health will, before this, have permitted you to push on the rear of the whole reinforcement beyond New Windsor. Some of the enemy's ships have arrived in the Delaware, but how many have troops on board, I cannot exactly ascertain. The enemy has lately damaged Fort Mifflin considerably, but our people keep possession and seem determined to do so to the last extremity. Our loss in men has been but small,—Captain Treat is unfortunately among the killed. I wish you a safe return, and am, dear sir."

His conduct during this mission was subsequently adverted to as highly indicative of the qualities of his character.

In his explanatory letter to Washington, Putnam enclosed to him a copy of Hamilton's letter. "This letter," he observed, "contains some most unjust and injurious reflections; for I am conscious of having done every thing in my power to succor you as speedily as possible." It was not the first time Putnam had received censure for

disobedience to orders.* Washington immediately replied: "The urgency of Colonel Hamilton's letter was owing to his knowledge of our wants in this quarter, and to a certainty that there was no danger to be apprehended from New York, if you sent all the continental troops that were then with you, and waited to replace them by those expected down the river. I cannot but say there has been more delay in the march of the troops than I think necessary; and I could wish that in future my orders may be immediately complied with, without arguing upon the propriety of them. If any accident ensues from obeying them, the fault will lie upon me, and not upon you."

The recent foray of the enemy up the Hudson indicated the necessity of establishing an effective, commanding post in the Highlands. With this view, on the second of December, soon after his return to head-quarters, Hamilton, in behalf of Washington, wrote to Putnam, urging the erection of works on that river, the importance of which, in his recent journey, he had seen in all its extent.

"The importance of the North River in the present contest, and the necessity of defending it, are subjects which have been so frequently and so fully discussed and are so well understood, that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon them. These facts at once appear, when it is considered that it runs through a whole State—that it is the only passage by which the enemy from New York or any part of our coast can ever hope to co-operate with an army that may come from Canada; that the possession of it is indispensably essential to preserve the communication between the Eastern, Middle and Southern States; and further, that upon its security in a great measure depend our chief supplies of flour for the subsistence of such

* Washington to Reed, Jan. 15, 1777.

forces as we may have occasion for in the course of the war either in the eastern or northern department, or in the country lying high up on the west side of it. These facts are familiar to all, they are familiar to you. I therefore request you, in the most urgent terms, to turn your most serious and active attention to this very and infinitely important object. Seize the present opportunity, and employ your whole force and all the means in your power for erecting and completing, as far as shall be possible, such works and obstructions as may be necessary to defend and secure the river against any future attempts of the enemy. You will consult Governor Clinton, General Parsons, and the French engineer, Colonel Radière, upon the occasion. By gaining the passage, you know the enemy have already laid waste and destroyed all the houses, mills and towns accessible to them. Unless proper measures are taken to prevent them, they will renew their ravages in the spring, or as soon as the season will admit, and perhaps Albany, the only town in the State of any importance remaining in our hands, may undergo a like fate, and a general havoc and devastation take place.

"To prevent these evils, therefore, I shall expect that you will exert every nerve and employ your whole force in future, while and whenever it is practicable, in constructing and forwarding the proposed works and means of defence. They must not be kept out on command, and acting in detachments to cover the country below, which is a consideration infinitely less important and interesting."

The peremptory tone of this letter shows the impression Putnam's conduct had produced. Not willing to incur any further hazards from his misconduct, he was soon after ordered to join the main army. It was supposed he

would be arrested.* A milder measure was preferred. He was sent temporarily to Connecticut until the public feeling should be quieted. Some time after he was attacked with paralysis. Nevertheless he retained his commission, and near the end of the war received a soothing letter from head-quarters.

During the period of Hamilton's absence, Howe was continuing his efforts to reduce the works on the Delaware. On the sixteenth of November, after a most gallant defence, Fort Mifflin was found to be no longer tenable. "The fire the last day of the siege," General Knox wrote to Colonel Lamb, "exceeded by far any thing seen in America. The enemy had five batteries on Province Island of eighteens, twenty-fours, and thirty-two pounders, at five hundred yards distance. Besides these, they brought up the new channel the large floating battery which was cut down in New York, mounting twenty-two twenty-four pounders, within forty yards of an angle of the battery on Mud Island. Four sixty-four gun ships within about nine hundred yards, and two forty gun ships. The incessant fire of these, joined with the fire of our floating batteries and gondolas, formed a scene truly picturesque, of the horrors and grandeur of war. The fire began at ten in the morning and lasted till late in the night. The brave little garrison, then commanded by Major Thayer of the Rhode Island troops, had but two cannon not dismounted. These soon shared the fate of the others. Every body who appeared on the platform were killed or wounded by the musketry from the tops of

* "For your comfort, I can tell you that old —— Putnam is ordered on to the main army, and a trial is inevitable. God speed it."—*Major Platt to Colonel Lamb, Nov.* 29, 1777.

Washington to Jay, April 14, 1779, as to command of expedition to Indians: "Putnam I need not mention."—*Jay's Life*, ii. 42.

the ships, whose yards almost hung over the battery. Long before night there was not a single palisade left. All the embrasures ruined and the whole parapet levelled. All the block houses had been battered down some days before. The brave garrison, finding no kind of shelter, were ordered to evacuate the place, which they did about two o'clock in the morning, having first burnt the barracks and brought off the stores. We exceedingly wish the enemy to come out and give us battle; but I believe that though this is an event they threaten, and we wish, it will not happen."

Whether Fort Mercer could be sustained was now the question. As soon as Washington learned the loss of Fort Mifflin, St. Clair, Knox and De Kalb were directed to inspect Fort Mercer. On their report, a reinforcement under General Greene was ordered to cross to its vicinity. Cornwallis having also crossed the Delaware, Greene was urged to advance and meet him, and to use every means to hasten the junction of Glover's brigade. The march of the enemy was so rapid, the Americans could not form a junction in time to succor the garrison. It was obliged to withdraw.*

Duplessis again exhibited to the latest moment the high courage of his blood.† In a letter written by Hamilton, for Washington, asking his promotion, it is stated: "After the evacuation was determined upon, he undertook as a

* Washington's Writings, v. 167.

† The Huguenot chief, Mornay du Plessis, of whose praise the French historians are full, was his ancestor. Voltaire took pleasure in devoting to him the choicest effort of his genius, and he is thus beautifully eulogized by Grotius:

"Nobilitas, animo claro quam sanguine major
Res hominum solers noscere, usque Dei
Consilium prudens, dives facundia linguæ
Hic cum Morneo, contumulata jacent."

This young friend of Hamilton was massacred at St. Domingo.

volunteer, the hazardous operation of blowing up the magazine without the apparatus usual on such occasions I must further add, that he possesses a degree of modesty not always found in men who perform brilliant actions. It is with pleasure that I recommend to Congress to give him a brevet of lieutenant-colonel. I hope there will be no difficulty in antedating the brevet, that the recompense may more immediately follow the service he has done."

The river thus opened to the fleet, Howe was enabled to hold Philadelphia, "though just before the reduction of the forts he balanced upon the point of quitting that city." Fort Mercer was abandoned on the twentieth of November, two days after the most advanced of the brigades from Albany reached head-quarters. Washington immediately convened a council of war to decide as to an attack upon Howe. It was disapproved, the force and cover of the enemy* not justifying the attempt.

Cornwallis having rejoined him, Howe, strengthened also by reinforcements from New York, resolved to move upon the Americans. On the fourth of December his army advanced to Chesnut Hill. Skirmishes ensued, and various manœuvres followed to draw the Americans from their post.

Washington, nevertheless, held his position on several commanding heights. Anticipating and desiring † an attack where he was, he rode through every brigade of his army, delivering in person his orders; exhorting his troops to rely chiefly on the bayonet, and encouraging them to their duty.‡ Howe seeing the firm countenance

* "The enemy have fortified themselves with fourteen strong redoubts, friezed and palisaded with strong abatis, running from one redoubt to the other."—*Knox to Lamb.*

† "I sincerely wish they had made an attack."—*Washington's Writings*, v. 182. ‡ Marshall, i. 184, who "states it on his own observation."

of his adversary, abandoned his purpose, and suddenly retreated within his lines. Winter was now upon them,* and the campaign ended.

"Had the reinforcement from the northward," Washington wrote to his brother, "arrived but ten days sooner, it would, I think, have put it in my power to save Fort Mifflin, which defended the chevaux de frise, and consequently have rendered Philadelphia a very ineligible situation for them this winter." Such were the quiet terms in which he adverted to the great wrong inflicted upon his country and upon himself by Gates and Putnam.

* Dec. 8.

CHAPTER XIII.

The capture of General Lee had removed him from the stage. Faction now beheld in Gates a ready instrument of its designs.

He was of humble origin, the offspring "of a second chambermaid" of a Walpole. His putative father was "a journeyman tailor," and the young Horatio, "*godson* of Horace Walpole," * was ushered into life under the auspices of nobility. He received the commission of ensign in the British army, became an aide of General Monckton, and was selected as bearer of the despatches announcing the capture of Martinique. His next appearance was as captain of an independent company of New York troops under Braddock, when he received a wound. At the close of this disastrous campaign, he repaired to his native England, and after a short absence returned to America and took up his abode in the interior of Virginia. At the opening of the revolution and at the instance of Washington, glad to avail himself of his military experience, he is seen to have been appointed adjutant-general with the rank of brigadier, and early in seventy-six was promoted to the grade of major-general.

This promotion gave offence. John Adams excused

* Walpole's Letters, iv. 220, thus italicised in the letter.

it to Heath on the score of his merit: "Congress has not determined to have no regard to the line of succession in promotions, but only that this line shall not be an invariable rule, but they mean to reserve a right of distinguishing extraordinary merit or demerit. * * * It is my opinion he would have been made a major-general much sooner, if his experience had not been thought indispensable in the adjutant-general's department." *

This impression of his extraordinary merit, without any previous act to warrant it, prompted caresses he little deserved, of most pernicious influence upon a character too susceptible to flattery.

His invidious and querulous temper is seen throughout his career. "What," he wrote to Putnam on the eve of the battle of Long Island, "what have you, and what have you not done? Sense, courage, honor and abilities, you know to be the great outlines of a general. My friend Tom Mifflin has an uncommon share of all four. Present my affectionate compliments to him." His complaisant countryman Gordon writes to him at this time: "I learn that the week before last our friends at New York were in much the same state as at the beginning of last January. If our dilatoriness does not ruin us, we shall be indebted to a special providence."

Thus, between jeers upon Washington and commendations of himself, Gates only wanted the lights of fortune to exhibit his weakness.

The successes of the northern army were rewarded by Congress with the honors that were their due. A proclamation for a national thanksgiving was issued. This was followed by a vote of thanks to Gates, Lincoln and Arnold, and to the officers and troops under their command. A gold medal was also ordered in commem-

* J. Adams to Heath, Aug. 8, 1776.

oration of this great event, to be presented in the name of the United States to Gates. Nor were Massachusetts or Connecticut content with this tribute of the whole people. Each ordered a special day of religious rejoicing.

Gates now loomed largely in the public eye. The prudential energy of Schuyler, the enterprise, the skill, the consummate prudence of Washington and Greene, their superintending care—all seemed to fade or be forgotten amid the blazon of his glory. On a public occasion in Massachusetts his health was drank before that of Washington, and her jealousy of military power was so far, for the moment, suppressed, that she authorized him to fill up all the commissions that might be vacant in the regiments of that State.

Lovell, chairman of the committee of foreign affairs, at first a schoolmaster in Boston, writes from Yorktown: "In truth, if you would give Burgoyne a little leisure to exercise his talent at farce writing, which he discovered in 'the Boston blockade,' he would furnish the world with a winter evening's entertainment at the expense of Congress, at least, if not of Congress and General Washington. Your army and the eastern militia are now strongly contrasted with those in the Middle States, even by the inhabitants of Philadelphia. It is said Howe would not have passed more than seventy miles from the ships which landed him, in his whole skin, in your neighborhood or among Yankee stone walls. Our (hope)* springs all from the northward, and almost all our confidence. By the winter, the middle army will be divided into Greenites and Mifflinians, if things do not take a great turn from their present situation. Verily our salvation must come from far."

* Illegible in the original.

On the day of Hamilton's mission to Gates, Colonel Reed, Washington's former aide-de-camp, also wrote to the successful general: "I have for some time volunteered it with this army, which, notwithstanding the labors and efforts of our amiable chief, has yet gathered no laurels. Howe's army is much stronger than we once apprehended, and repeated checks have taken off that ardor of emulation which leads to success. I have been so unlucky as to differ in opinion too generally with those who conduct our operations, but I perfectly agree with them in that sentiment which leads to request your assistance."

Lovell again wrote: "You have saved our northern hemisphere. In spite of our consummate and repeated blundering, you have changed the constitution of the southern campaign of the enemy from offensive to defensive. If you had remained with this army we might have opposed, but could not have counteracted the deep-rooted system of favoritism which began to shoot forth at New York, and which now has arrived at its full growth and maturity. Repeated slights and unjustifiable arrogance combined with other causes to drive from the army those who would not worship the image, and pay an undeserved tribute of praise and flattery to the great and powerful. The list of our disgusted patriots is long and formidable; their resentments keen against the reigning cabal; and their powers of opposition not despicable. The campaign here must soon close. If no brilliant action takes place before it ends, if our troops are obliged to retire to Lancaster, Reading, Bethlehem, &c., for winter quarters, and the country below is left open to the enemy's flying parties, great and very general will be the murmur. So great and so general, that nothing inferior to a commander-in-chief will be able to resist the mighty torrent of public clamor and public vengeance. We have had a

noble army melted down by ill-judged marches—marches that disgrace their authors and directors, and which have occasioned the severest and most just sarcasm and contempt of our enemies. How much are you to be envied, my dear general! How different your conduct and your fortune!

"A letter from Colonel Mifflin, received since the writing of the last paragraph, gives me the disagreeable intelligence of the loss of our fort in Delaware. You must know the consequences. Loss of the river, boats, galleys, ships-of-war &c., good winter quarters to the enemy, and a general retreat, or an ill-judged, blind attempt on our part to save a gone character.

"Conway, Spotswood, Conner, Ross, Col. J. Mifflin resigned; and many good officers preparing their letters to Congress on the same subject. In short,this army will be totally lost unless you come down and collect the virtuous band who wish to fight under your banner, and with their aid save the southern hemisphere. Prepare yourself for a jaunt to this place. Congress must send for you. I have a thousand things to tell you."

Weak and vain-glorious Gates had precisely those traits of character which would recommend him to the designing, without having the penetration to discover that he was a tool. Presumptuous and irresolute, he engaged in intrigues that he had not the sagacity to direct, and sought responsibilities which he had not the firmness to sustain.

Immediately after the surrender of Burgoyne, Colonel Morgan waited upon Gates for orders. He led him aside and told him, confidentially, that the main army was extremely dissatisfied with the conduct of the war by the commander-in-chief; and that several of the best officers threatened to resign unless a change took place. The

plain teamster, Morgan, sternly replied, "I have one favor to ask of you, that is, never to mention this detestable subject to me again, for under no other man than Washington as commander-in-chief will I ever serve." Gates punished the offence by a mere cursory notice in his despatches of this gallant officer, to whom he was so much indebted, and treated him with marked reserve.* Arnold was not less unfairly dealt with. He was the object of his jealous hate.

Gates also sought to win the favor of Governor Clinton, of too much practical sense to be thus ensnared. In his notion of assembling at Morristown the forces detached from himself, he proposed to him their command.†

The arrests of several officers for misconduct, and the well-grounded dissatisfaction of other officers with the fickle policy of Congress, prepared the army for improper influences.

From its many heads the faction which had formed was called "The Monster Party," the busiest of whom were Conway and Mifflin.

The former, appearing before Congress, a penniless colonel in the French service, decorated with the cross of the order of St. Louis, a vain, weak intriguer, had been in the preceding spring appointed to the command of a brigade.

A few days after the action at Germantown, a rumor reached Washington that he either had been, or was about to be chosen major-general. This rumor probably arose from a proposition in Congress, founded upon a letter from Conway asking promotion, to direct an inquiry to be made by Washington as to the priority of rank in France

* Lee's Southern War. Graham's "Life of Morgan."

† Corresp. Rev., ii. 548.

between De Kalb and Conway. It was defeated by the vote of seven of the eleven States present, all the members from New England opposing it. Washington wrote to Richard Henry Lee in Congress: "It will be as unfortunate a measure as ever was adopted. I may add, and I think with truth, that it will give a fatal blow to the existence of this army. General Conway's merit as an officer, and his importance in this army, exist more in his own imagination than in reality. For it is a maxim with him, to leave no service of his own untold, nor to want any thing which is to be obtained by importunity." He then stated his conviction, that if this promotion were made, the brigadiers "would not serve under him." "I must conjure you to conjure Congress to consider this matter well, and not by a real act of injustice compel some good officers to leave the service, and thereby incur a train of evils unforeseen and irremediable." He disclaimed any prejudice against him.

Notwithstanding his many advocates, when the decided opposition of the commander-in-chief was known, a pause was seen. Conway felt the influence which had been exerted. He resolved to undermine it, and to cultivate the favor of Gates in the first tide of his rising fortunes. He wrote him, mingling censures of Washington with adulations to himself: "Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it." This marked passage had been seen by Wilkinson, adjutant-general of Gates, and by him, while on his tardy way to Congress with despatches, was disclosed to an aide-de-camp of Lord Stirling, who communicated it to Washington. He enclosed a copy of it to Conway without comment. A week after, Conway announced to the commander-in-chief that he had sent in his resignation. The reply was, when the

consent of Congress is obtained, "I shall not object to your departure since it is your inclination."

In the mean time, the proceedings of that body indicate the policy beginning to prevail. The terms of capitulation granted to Burgoyne had caused such dissatisfaction that an apology was offered; "The reduction of Fort Montgomery, and the enemy's progress up the river endangered the arsenal at Albany, a reflection which left him no time to test the capitulation." Obviously futile as the excuse was, "these terms were pronounced honorable and advantageous to the States."

The public discontent was not stifled. The committee of safety of New York addressed Congress with earnest censure; and it became necessary to bring the subject again under consideration. The committee to whom it was referred made a report; but upon an allegation that more time was necessary to obtain a knowledge of the facts, its consideration was postponed, but not without a wide division of opinion.* This subject was frequently resumed, when motions of inquiry and for obtaining information were defeated. Yet such was the dissatisfaction of subsequent Congresses with this capitulation, that the obligations of good faith were never fulfilled.

Immediately after Hamilton had departed on his mission to Gates to expedite reinforcements, some pregnant resolutions were passed, founded on the report of a committee, of which Richard Henry Lee was chairman.† They resolved that, "General Washington be informed, that it is the earnest wish of Congress to regain the possession of the forts and passes of the Hudson River," and,

* Nov. 8 Affirmative—Folsom, Gerry, Law, Williams, Duane, Duer, Elmer, Smith, Harvie, Perrin, Harnett—11. Negative—Samuel Adams, John Adams, Lovell, Marchant, Dyer, Roberdeau, Clingan, Jones, F. L. Lee, Laurens—10.

† Nov. 5.

for that purpose, that General Gates should remain in command in that quarter, and that Putnam join the main army with such detachment from the army under Gates, as General Washington may think can be spared, not exceeding twenty-five hundred men, including Morgan's corps.

Gates was ordered to make a proper disposition of the army for reducing the posts on the Hudson. Authority was given to him to order such of the continental troops and militia as were posted near to join him, and also to call on the several States for such numbers of militia as he should judge necessary to maintain those posts, "to the end that his army may be in readiness to pursue such operations as Congress shall direct." Further authority was granted him, to call for all "the aids he should judge necessary for the reduction of Ticonderoga and Fort Independence at such time as he should deem best adapted for that expedition."

A resolution was added, probably as an amendment, that "if General Washington, after *consulting General Gates* and Governor Clinton, shall be of opinion that a larger reinforcement can be detached to the main army, consistent with the attainment of the objects" committed to Gates, "in such case he be *directed* to order such farther reinforcements to the main army as may be thought conducive to the general welfare, any thing in the preceding resolution to the contrary notwithstanding."

In debating this resolution it was moved, after "directed," to insert "with their concurrence." This amendment was negatived by every State except Massachusetts, which was divided, and by one vote from Rhode Island,* and the resolution was carried by a vote of eighteen to five members.†

* Samuel Adams, John Adams, Gerry, Marchant, Dyer.

† *Negs.*—S. Adams, Gerry, Marchant, Dyer, Roberdeau.

The obvious effect of this procedure would have been to take from Washington the supreme command, and to render his success and safety dependent upon the approval of a rival; limiting the succors he was to receive so low as to ensure the necessity of his inactivity, while Gates, with new trophies, should stand unrivalled in the public favor. The cabal were attempting to play the game in which Lee had failed a twelvemonth before.

While her representation in Congress sustained Washington, Pennsylvania, to a great degree, appeared to coincide with Massachusetts. She felt his reproaches of her feeble aids, and resented in his person, the possession of her capital by the enemy.

These feelings found an active partisan in General Mifflin, a native of this State, of great personal popularity and extensive influence. Shrewd, bland, eloquent, he spoke with effect to the patriotic feeling, and still retained some hold upon the Quakers, in whose tenets he had been educated.* Early chosen an aide-de-camp to Washington, he retired from his staff retaining his favor, and was appointed by him quarter-master general.

This station he accepted, then resigned to take his place in the line, where he served with credit a short time, when, at the instance of Congress, he resumed it. Ere long he was promoted to the rank of major-general. The distresses of the army during his administration of the quarter-master-general's department led to an investigation by Congress. Their report urged that "not a moment's time be lost in placing a man of approved abilities and extenisve capacity at the head of the department,

* Chastellux states, i. 181: "He is a smart, sensible, active, and agreeable little man. I never saw him without thinking of *Garrick*. He is about the same size and figure, and his countenance sparkles with significance and expression."

who will restore it to some degree of order and regularity, whose provident care will immediately relieve the wants of the army, and extend itself to those which must be satisfied before we can expect vigor, enterprise and success."

Such censure, the frequent and unavoidable complaints of Washington, and his earnest desire to place Greene at the head of this department, between whom and Mifflin unkind feelings existed, irritated his mind, and made him an avowed enemy of the commander-in-chief. His ear, he alleged, was exclusively possessed by Greene. His campaign was a series of blunders. His incapacity was obvious. The better fortune of the northern army was ascribed to the superior talent of its leader. Gates was the man who should of right have the station so incompetently filled by Washington.*

Mifflin, smarting under their censure, asked leave of Congress to resign his commission in the line and in the staff, pleading ill health. Compelled by the force of public opinion, Congress accepted his resignation as quartermaster-general, but resolved that his commission in the line be retained, though without pay, until further order. Yet on the same day, such were the dominant influences in the selection of a new Board of War, Mifflin was placed at its head. The inefficiency of the former board had induced Congress to determine that a Board of War, to act under the superintendence of the existing board, should be constituted of three persons, not members of their body.

To render the selection less publicly offensive, Colonels Pickering and Harrison, the secretary of Washington, were associated with Mifflin. Harrison declined the appointment. The Congressional board soon after † re-

* Graydon's Memoirs, 299. † Nov. 24.

ported, that, after a conference with General Mifflin, they were of opinion "that a sufficient number of commissioners had not been appointed in order to give due weight to the regulations which might be recommended by the board and adopted by Congress, and particularly for enabling one of the board to visit, from time to time, the different armies, in order to see that these regulations were executed, and to examine what the wants of the army were, and what defects or abuses prevail, from time to time, in the different departments."

Upon this report it was resolved, that two additional commissioners be appointed; and on the twenty-seventh of November three commissioners were elected, General Gates, Joseph Trumbull, entirely in his interest, and Richard Peters. Thus a majority was secured to Gates. A resolution was also passed, that the President of Congress inform General Gates of his appointment, expressing "the high sense they entertain of his abilities and peculiar fitness to discharge the duties of that important office, upon the right execution of which the success of the American cause does eminently depend—that it is the intention of Congress to continue his rank as major-general; and that he may officiate at the board or in the field, as occasion may require; and that he be requested to repair to Congress with all convenient dispatch, to enter upon the duties of his appointment."

Lovell instantly wrote him: "We want you in different places, but most of all in a third which you are not called to balance about. We *want you most, near Germantown.* Good God! What a situation are we in! How different from what might have been justly expected! You will be astonished when you come to know accurately what numbers have, at one time and another, been collected near Philadelphia to wear out stockings, shoes

and breeches. Depend upon it, for every ten soldiers placed under the command of our Fabius, five recruits will be wanted annually during the war. The brave fellows at Fort Mifflin and Red Bank have despaired of succor and been obliged to quit. The naval department have fallen into circumstances of seeming disgrace. Come to the Board of War, if only for a short season. * * * * If it was not for the defeat of Burgoyne, and the strong appearances of an European war, our affairs are Fabiussed into a very disagreeable posture. Conway has resigned, and many spirited officers by an overbalance of * * * * * * * counsellors."

The following day, the President of Congress, Henry Laurens, announced to Gates his election to preside at the Board of War; and Mifflin communicated to him privately the recent exposure of Conway. "An extract," he wrote,† "from General Conway's letter to you has been procured and sent to head-quarters. The extract was *a collection of just sentiments*, yet such as should not have been entrusted to any of your family. General Washington enclosed it to Conway without remarks. It was supported, and the freedom of the sentiment not apologized for. On the contrary, although some reflections were made on some people, yet the practice was pleaded boldly and no satisfaction given. My dear general, take care of your generosity and frank disposition. They cannot injure yourself, but they may injure some of your best friends. Affectionately yours."

Gates writhed under this intelligence. Remote, exposed, uncertain to what extent his letters had been divulged, he had no means of learning how far he was committed, nor by whom. His only resource was to write for information. Conway was first addressed in a

* Obscured in the original. † Nov. 28.

letter expressing regret at his resignation, and casting censures upon Washington. The purpose was reserved for the postscript: "I entreat you, dear general, to let me know which of the letters was copied off. It is of the greatest importance that I should detect the person, who has been guilty of that act of infidelity." The next day Mifflin was informed of his "inexpressible distress." "Though to this moment I have been ruminating who could be the villain that has played me this treacherous trick, yet I can find no clue to a discovery. There is scarcely a man living who takes greater care of his papers than I do. I never fail to lock them up and keep the key in my pocket. No punishment is too severe for the wretch who betrayed me; and I doubt not your friendship for me as well as your zeal for *our safety* will bring the name of the miscreant to public light."

After four days of tribulation, he dispatched a letter to Washington, thinking to fix on him the imputation of having by indirect means obtained access to his confidential correspondence.

Relying upon his present popularity, he hoped to make Congress a party to his cause. With this view, he enclosed a copy of this letter to them, calling for their aid in this scrutiny. "I cannot," he wrote, "believe that the traitorous thief will long escape detection, after the patriotism of the delegates shall have been alarmed."

His letter to Washington was in these extraordinary terms:

"Sir,—I shall not attempt to describe what, as a private gentleman, I cannot help feeling, on representing to my mind the disagreeable situation in which confidential letters, when exposed to public inspection, may place an unsuspecting correspondent; but as a public officer, I conjure your excellency to give me all the assistance you

can, in tracing out the author of the infidelity which put extracts from General Conway's letters to me into your hands.

Those letters have been *stealingly copied*, but which of them, when, and by whom, is to me yet an unfathomable secret.

There is not one officer in my suite, nor amongst those who have free access to me, upon whom I could, with the least justification to myself, fix the suspicion, and yet my uneasiness may deprive me of the usefulness of the worthiest men. It is, *I believe*, in *your excellency's power* to do me and the United States a very important service by detecting a wretch who may betray me, and capitally injure the very operations under *your immediate directions*. For this reason, sir, I beg your excellency will favor me with the proof you can procure to that effect. But the crime being eventually so important, that the least loss of time may be attended with the worst consequences, and it being unknown to me whether the letter came to you from a member of Congress or an officer, I shall have the honor of transmitting a copy of this to the president, that the Congress may, in concert with your excellency, obtain as soon as possible a discovery which so deeply affects the safety of the States. Crimes of that magnitude ought not to remain unpunished. I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect,—"

The cabal had in the interval pursued their object. The Board of War, to whom two letters of Conway were referred, presented a report, "that it was essential to the promotion of discipline in the American army, and to the reformation of the various abuses which prevail in the different departments, that an appointment be made of INSPECTOR-GENERAL, agreeable to the practice of the best disciplined armies of Europe," and that this appointment

be conferred "on experienced and vigilant general officers, who are acquainted with whatever relates to the general economy, manœuvres, and discipline, of a well regulated army."

Powers were conferred upon this office, in effect paramount to those of the commander-in-chief. It was resolved, that two inspectors-general should be appointed, and, in despite of Washington's earnest remonstrance, and in disregard of his recent resignation, Conway was elected * inspector-general, and also appointed a major-general.

Though he had attained the object of his ambition, yet, knowing the influence of Washington over the public mind, and aware of the dissatisfaction his promotion had excited in the army, he felt it would be a great object to obtain his sanction.

He wrote to the commander-in-chief, proposing to enter immediately upon the performance of his duties, asking his views as to the mode of executing them. He then stated that he "accepted the office of inspector-general with the view of being instrumental to the welfare of the cause and to the glory of the commander-in-chief, in making his troops fit to execute his orders. The rank of major-general, which was given me, is absolutely requisite for this office, in order to be vested with proper authority to superintend the instruction and the internal administration. There is no inspector in the European armies under a major-general. However, sir, if my appointment is productive of any inconvenience, or any wise disagreeable to your excellency, as I neither applied nor solicited for this place, I am very ready to return to France, where I have pressing business; and this I will do with the more satisfaction, as I expect even there to

* Dec. 13.

be useful to the cause." This statement is at variance with his prior letters soliciting the appointment.

The next day a reply was given by Hamilton over Washington's name:

"I am favored with your letter of yesterday, in which you propose (in order to lose no time) to begin with the instruction of the troops. You will observe, by the resolution of Congress relative to your appointment, that the Board of War is to furnish a set of instructions, according to which the troops are to be manœuvred. As you have made no mention of having received them, I suppose they are not come to you: when they do, I shall issue any orders which may be judged necessary to have them carried into immediate execution.

"Your appointment of inspector-general to the army, has not, I believe, given the least uneasiness to any officer in it. By consulting your own feelings upon the appointment of the Baron De Kalb, you may judge what must be the sensation of those brigadiers, who by your promotion are superseded. I am told they are determined to remonstrate against it. For my own part, I have nothing to do in the appointment of general officers, and shall always afford every countenance and due respect to those appointed by Congress, taking it for granted that, prior to any resolve of that nature, they take a dispassionate view of the merits of the officer to be promoted, and consider every consequence that can result from such a procedure; nor have I any other wish on that head, but that good, attentive officers may be chosen, and no extraordinary promotion take place, but when the merit of the officer is so generally acknowledged as to obviate every reasonable cause of dissatisfaction thereat."

Defeated in his object, Conway immediately replied in this offensive manner: "What you are pleased to call an

extraordinary promotion is a very plain one. There is nothing extraordinary in it, only that such a place was not thought of sooner. The general and universal merit which you wish every promoted officer might be endowed with, is a rare gift. We see but few men of merit so generally acknowledged. We know but the great Frederick in Europe, and the great Washington on this continent. I certainly never was so rash as to pretend to such a prodigious height. Neither do I pretend to any superiority in personal qualities over my brother brigadiers, for whom I have much regard. But you, sir, and the great Frederick know perfectly well, that this trade is not learnt in a few months." Vaunting his long experience, he closed, "However, sir, by the complexion of your letter, and by the two receptions you have honored me with since my arrival, I perceive that I have not the happiness of being agreeable to your excellency, and that I can expect no support in fulfilling the laborious duty of an inspector-general. I do not mean to give you or any officer in the army the least uneasiness. Therefore I am very ready to return to France, and to the army where I hope I shall meet with no frowns."

To prevent misrepresentation. it was thought expedient to communicate these letters to Congress. On the second of January, seventy-eight, a letter written by Hamilton in Washington's name was transmitted to them:

"I take the liberty of transmitting to you the enclosed copies of a letter from me to General Conway since his return from York to camp, and of two letters from him to me which you will be pleased to lay before Congress. I shall not in this letter animadvert upon them; but after making a single observation, submit the whole to Congress.

"If General Conway means by cool receptions, men-

tioned in the last paragraph of his letter of the 31st ultimo, that I did not receive him in the language of a warm and cordial friend, I readily confess the charge. I did not, nor shall I ever, till I am capable of the arts of dissimulation. These I despise, and my feelings will not permit me to make professions of friendship to the man I deem my enemy, and whose system of conduct forbids it. At the same time, truth authorizes me to say, that he was received and treated with proper respect to his official character, and that he has had no cause to justify the assertion, that he could not expect any support for fulfilling the duties of his appointment."

Washington at this time received the letter of Gates demanding the source of his information as to the extract of Conway's letter. He replied on the fourth of January:

"Your letter of the 8th ultimo, came to my hands a few days ago, and to my great surprise informed me that a copy of it had been sent to Congress,—for what reason I find myself unable to account; but as some end, doubtless, was intended to be answered by it, I am laid under the disagreeable necessity of returning my answer through the same channel, lest any member of that honorable body should harbor an unfavorable suspicion of my having practised some indirect means to come at the contents of the confidential letters between you and General Conway.

I am to inform you, then, that Colonel Wilkinson, on his way to Congress, in the month of October last, fell in with Lord Stirling at Reading, and, not in confidence, that I ever understood, informed his aide-de-camp, McWilliams, that General Conway had written thus to you: 'Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors * would have ruined it.'

* "One of these, by the bye, he was," in a note in his hand.

Lord Stirling, from motives of friendship, transmitted the account, with this remark,—'The enclosed was communicated by Colonel Wilkinson to Major McWilliams. Such duplicity of conduct I shall always think it my duty to defeat.'

"In consequence of this information, and without having any thing more in view than merely to show that gentleman that I was not unapprised of his intriguing disposition, I wrote him a letter in these words: 'Sir, a letter which I received last night, contained the following paragraph in a letter from General Conway to General Gates: he says,—'Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it. I am, &c.'

"Neither this letter, nor the information which occasioned it, was ever directly or indirectly communicated by me to a single officer in this army out of my own family, excepting the Marquis de la Fayette, who having been spoken to on the subject by General Conway, applied for, and saw, under injunctions of secrecy, the letter which contained Colonel Wilkinson's information. So desirous was I of concealing every matter that could in its consequences give the smallest interruption to the tranquillity of this army, or afford a gleam of hope to the enemy by dissensions therein.

"Thus, sir, with openness and candor, which I hope will ever characterize and mark my conduct, have I complied with your request. The only concern I feel upon the occasion, finding how matters stand, is, that in doing this, I have necessarily been obliged to name a gentleman whom I am persuaded, (although I never exchanged a word with him on the subject,) thought he was rather doing an act of justice, than committing an act of infidelity; and sure I am, that till Lord Stirling's letter came to my

hands, I never knew that General Conway (whom I viewed in the light of a stranger to you) was a correspondent of yours, much less did I expect that I was the subject of your confidential letters. Pardon me, then, for adding, that so far from conceiving that the safety of the States can be affected, or in the smallest degree injured by a discovery of this kind, or that I should be called on in such solemn terms to point out the author, that I considered the information as coming from yourself, and given with a friendly view to forewarn, and, consequently, forearm me against a secret enemy; or in other words, a *dangerous incendiary*, in which character, sooner or later, this country will know General Conway. But in this, as in other matters of late, I have found myself mistaken."

This letter was enclosed to the President of Congress in a note written by Hamilton over Washington's signature, on the fourth of January.

"Unwilling as I am to add any thing to the multiplicity of matter that necessarily engages the attention of Congress, I am compelled by unavoidable necessity to pass my answer to General Gates through their hands.

"What could induce General Gates to communicate a copy of his letters to me through that honorable body, is beyond the depth of my comprehension, upon any fair ground; but the fact being so, must stand as an apology for a liberty, which no other consideration would have induced me to take, to give you this trouble."

CHAPTER XIV.

While Gates was reflecting upon his embarrassed situation, Washington was fully occupied with his public duties.

In a very cogent letter written soon after the army entered winter quarters, a full view was given to Congress of its sufferings and its weakness resulting from the defective management of the commissariat. Even Lovell, hostile as he was to the commander-in-chief, acknowledges, in a private letter to General Lee, the sufficiency of his vindication:

"The extremities of these injuries," he wrote, "which were prophesied some months ago, are now realized in the commissariat; and we now find most of our high expectations from the expensive establishment of the quartermaster, had not a thorough foundation. General Washington has made this evident, and shows it fairly to be the clue to unravel our many seemingly mysterious past miscarriages in the field."

It was the criminal policy of the cabal to drive Washington into measures to diminish his popularity. He had been invested after the battle of Brandywine a second time, as previously stated, with large powers. Late in December, the legislatures of the several States were

earnestly recommended by Congress to enact laws, "appointing persons to seize and take for the use of the continental army, all the necessary articles suitable for its clothing, to empower the commissary-general to seize stock and every kind of provision necessary for it; and among other things, to limit the number of retailers of goods, who were to be compelled to take licenses and execute bonds; providing, that no person should sell by wholesale except the importer, and then only to such licensed retailers; and that no person not licensed should be permitted to buy more than was necessary for his domestic use." A circular letter was addressed to the States expressing a "hope," that these measures "will be carried into execution as secretly and expeditiously as possible."

Improbable as the execution of such arbitrary laws seemed, and remote as the aid, if any, must be derived from them, the true remedy was to correct the abuses in, and impart energy and system to the commissariat. This would offend individuals upon whom the cabal counted, and would be a public acknowledgment of one of the principal causes of the "miscarriages in the field." It was preferred to compel Washington to the exercise of powers that must render him obnoxious. He must be left without aid from Congress or from the Board of War, to subsist his army by forcible impressments, or it must disband.

The scope of their policy was seen, and in a short letter addressed to the President of Congress on the fifth of January, in the name of the commander-in-chief, was exposed to them by Hamilton.

"The letter you allude to from the Committee of Congress and Board of War came to hand on Saturday morning, but it does not mention the regulations adopted

for removing the difficulties and failures in the commissary line. I trust they will be vigorous or the army cannot exist. It will never answer to procure supplies of clothing or provision by coercive measures. The small seizures made of the former a few days ago, in consequence of the most pressing and absolute necessity, when that or to dissolve was the alternative, excited the greatest alarm and uneasiness, even among our best and warmest friends. Such procedures may give a momentary relief; but, if repeated, will prove of the most pernicious consequence. Beside spreading dissaffection, jealousy and fear among the people, they never fail, even in the most veteran troops, under the most rigid and exact discipline, to raise in the soldiery a disposition to licentiousness, to plunder and robbery, difficult to suppress afterwards, and which has proved not only ruinous to the inhabitants, but in many instances to armies themselves. I regret the occasion that compelled us to the measure the other day, and shall consider it among the greatest of our misfortunes if we should be under the necessity of practising it again."

A few days after, Hamilton, over Washington's signature, wrote to Congress, submitting several important questions arising as to a capture recently made by a detachment of the army, and by a party of militia, in order that "certain principles might be established to govern in the like and future cases." On the twenty-second of January of the previous year, Washington issued a general order declaring that "such articles as are taken, not necessary for the use of the army, should be sold at public vendue, under the direction of the quarter-master-general, or of some of his deputies, for the benefit of the captors." This order was in principle conformable with the practice of the British government. The questions propounded were, "What articles captured are to be con-

sidered as public property? Whether articles captured by parties or detachments, not determined public property, are to be distributed or sold for the benefit of the army at large, or are to be considered as the sole and exclusive right of the captors. If in general instances, such articles as are taken and which are not considered public property, are determined to be the sole and exclusive right of the captors, are stationary departments, which from their situation have much more than a common chance of making prizes, to be considered upon the same footing, and if there is to be a distinction between stationary and other detachments, and the former are deemed to have an exclusive right to the captures they make, what proportion of the articles are they to have?"

The legislation upon this subject long deferred is very incomplete, and not very liberal.

After an interval of a few days, on the tenth of January, Conway, confiding in the strength of the faction in Congress, wrote again to Washington: "I understand that your aversion to me is owing to the letter I wrote to General Gates. There is not a subaltern in Europe but what will write to his friends and acquaintances, and mention freely his opinion of the generals and of the army; but I never heard that the least notice was taken of these letters. Must such an odious and tyrannical inquisition begin in this country? Must it be introduced by the commander-in-chief of this army raised for the defence of liberty? I cannot believe, sir, neither does any officer in your army believe, that the objection to my appointment originates from any body living but from you. Since you will not accept of my services, since you cannot bear the sight of me in your camp, I am very ready to go wherever Congress thinks proper, and even to France; and I solemnly declare, that, far from resenting

the undeserved rebuke I met with from you, I shall do every thing in my power to serve the cause."

Thus far the cabal had failed in their object. On the day of the date of this letter, a more decisive measure was resorted to, which, it was hoped, might drive Washington to resign. A resolution was passed for the appointment of a committee, to consist of three members of Congress and three members of the Board of War, to repair to head-quarters, with general powers to reorganize the army, "to recommend the necessary appointments of general officers, to remove officers in the civil departments of the army and to appoint others in their room; to report to Congress their opinion of the necessary reinforcements and the best mode of obtaining them; to report such alterations as they should deem expedient in the regulations of the several departments; and in general, to adopt such measures as they should judge necessary for introducing economy and promoting discipline and good morals in the army."

This committee was to act nominally in concert with Washington, but could be regarded by him in no other light than as a permanent court of inquiry into his conduct.

The members chosen were significant of its purpose, —Dana and Folsom from New England, and Reed of Pennsylvania, from Congress.—Gates, Mifflin and Pickering of the Board of War were associated with them two days after. Wilkinson was appointed secretary. Harvie was subsequently added to the committee.

As though to encourage the dissatisfaction of Pennsylvania, and to accumulate insults upon Washington, the same faction passed a resolution applauding "the rising spirit of the inhabitants" of that State to regain their capital; declaring the readiness of Congress with all their

power to "co-operate with them," and directing the committee appointed to proceed to the camp, "to consult with the president and council of Pennsylvania, and with General Washington," on the practicability of an attack. At the same time the excitement of the legislature of that State was brought in aid.

The recent statement of Washington of the condition of the army seemed to be wholly disregarded. "Few men," he wrote, "have more than one shirt, many only the moiety of one, and some none at all. A number of men confined to hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farmers' houses on the same account. We have, by a field return this day made, no less than two thousand eight hundred ninety-eight men now in camp unfit for duty, because they are barefoot and otherwise naked, numbers having been obliged for want of blankets and still are, to sit up all night by fires instead of taking comfortable rest in a natural way. I can assure these gentlemen, that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room, by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel superabundantly for them, and from my soul pity those miseries which it is not in my power to relieve or to prevent."

This letter was dated from the camp at Valley Forge,* which lies on the western side of the Schuylkill, convenient to the rich country of Lancaster and Reading, and in the first step of the ascent of hills which reach to the North Mountain or Blue Ridge. It possessed every advantage which strength of ground or salubrity of climate could bestow. Here, by the hands of his soldiers, Wash-

* Lee's Southern War, 47, gives this description, with fuller remarks.

ington erected a town of huts, and strengthened his position by all the helps of art and industry. He was now occupied in instructing his troops, and subjecting them at the same time to inoculation for the small pox, then a fearful pestilence.

The sufferings of the soldiery in this encampment did not only proceed from want of clothing and of protection from the cold; nor were abuses only seen in the quartermaster's department. The conduct of the hospital department was believed to have increased the distress and fatality of disease. This important matter was referred to a committee. Linen and blankets were ordered to be reserved for the sick, clothes to be supplied to the convalescent; a member of Congress was specially charged to visit the hospitals in the middle department; and the clergy were requested to solicit charitable "donations of woollens or linens for the sick soldiers." To probe the evil to its source, Shippen, the director general of all the military hospitals in the United States, and Rush, who had been surgeon-general, and was now "physician-general of the hospital in the middle department," were ordered on the sixth of January to attend Congress on the twenty-sixth of that month, "to be examined touching certain abuses said to prevail in the hospital." * Letters were received from these officers, and on the twenty-seventh of that month were referred to a Committee of Congress, who were directed "to send for them and to hear them and to report specially." The next day Rush resigned. His resignation was forthwith accepted.† Shippen continued in office. Soon after, letters were addressed to Washington and to a member of Congress by Rush, charging Shippen with malconduct. An inquiry was instituted, but, it would seem, was not proceeded in. Similar charges were sub-

* Journals Congress, ii. 394. † Ibid. 422, Jan. 28.

sequently preferred by another physician. Shippen was arrested, tried before a court martial, and acquitted.

On the day this matter was taken up in Congress, a letter was addressed to Washington by his faithful surgeon, Craig, stating "that a strong faction was forming against him in the new Board of War and in the Congress." "It was said that some of the eastern and southern members were at the bottom of it, particularly one, who has been said to be your enemy before, but denied it, Richard Henry Lee; and that General Mifflin, in the new Board of War, was a very active person. This last, I am afraid, is too true. I have reason to believe he is not your friend from many circumstances." After stating the low artifices resorted to, he proceeds: "It is said, they dare not appear openly as your enemies, but that the new Board of War is composed of such leading men as will throw such obstacles and difficulties in your way, *as to force you to resign*." "Mifflin is plausible, sensible, popular, and ambitious, takes great pains to draw over every officer he meets with to his own way of thinking, and is very engaging."

Six days later, on the twelfth of January, an anonymous letter was addressed to Patrick Henry, Governor of Virginia, intended to destroy Washington in his native State, which shows that the recently instituted inquiry as to the hospital department was not without effect. A compliment to Henry and a flourish of patriotism precede a sketch of the condition of the public councils and of the army. "America can only be outdone by herself. She looks up to her councils and arms for protection; but, alas! what are they? Her representation in Congress dwindled to only twenty-one members; her Adams, her Wilson, her Henry are no more among them. Her councils weak, and partial remedies applied constantly for

universal diseases. Her army, what is it? a major-general belonging to it, called it, a few days ago, in my hearing, a mob. Discipline unknown, or wholly neglected. The quarter-master's and commissary's departments filled with idleness, ignorance, and peculation; our hospitals crowded with six thousand sick, but half provided with necessaries for accommodations, and more dying in them in one month than perished in the field during the whole of the last campaign. The money depreciating, without any effectual measures being taken to raise it." "But is our case desperate? By no means. We have wisdom, virtue, and strength enough to save us, if they could be called into action. The northern army has shown us what Americans are capable of doing with a general at their head. The spirit of the southern army is no way inferior to the spirit of the northern. A Gates, a Lee, a Conway, would in a few weeks render them an irresistible body of men. The last of the above officers has accepted of the new office of inspector-general of our army, in order to reform abuses, but the remedy is only a palliative one." He states that the author "is one of his Philadelphia friends. A hint of his name, if found out by the handwriting, must not be mentioned to your most intimate friend. Even the letter must be thrown in the fire. But some of its contents ought to be made public, in order to awaken, enlighten and alarm our country."

This paper was enclosed by Patrick Henry to Washington, who, acknowledging it, remarked, "The anonymous letter with which you were pleased to favor me, was written by Doctor Rush, so far as I can judge from a similitude of hands. This man has been elaborate and studied in his professions of regard for me, and long since the letter to you."—"I cannot precisely mark the extent

of their views" (the cabal), "but it appeared in general, that General Gates was to be exalted on the ruin of my reputation and influence."

Another anonymous communication, entitled "Thoughts of a Freeman," was addressed to Henry Laurens, who had been recently elected President of Congress in place of Hancock, which was transmitted by him to Washington. After a labored censure of the commander-in-chief and of the administration of military affairs, it closed, stating, that "The head cannot be sound when the whole body is disordered; that the people of America have been guilty of idolatry, by making a man their god; and the God of heaven and earth will convince them by woful experience, that he is only a man; that no good may be expected from the standing army, until Baal and his worshippers are banished from the camp."

While such vile means were being used to impair confidence in Washington, Gates was waiting intelligence as to the letter of Conway. Inflated by the incense offered to him, and relieved by Washington's disclosure of the limited extent of his knowledge of his correspondence with Conway, and that its authority rested upon a verbal statement of Wilkinson, Gates thought an easy escape was open to him. On the twenty-third of January he answered Washington:

"The letter of the 4th inst. which I had the honor to receive yesterday from your excellency, has relieved me from unspeakable uneasiness. I now anticipate the pleasure it will give you when you discover that what has been conveyed to you for an extract of General Conway's letter to me, was not an information which friendly motives induced a man of honor to give, that injured virtue might be forewarned against secret enemies. The paragraph which your excellency has condescended to

transcribe is spurious. It was certainly fabricated to answer the most selfish and wicked purposes.

"I cannot avoid sketching out to your excellency the history of General Conway's letter from the time that it came to my hands, by Lieutenant-colonel Troup, my aide-de-camp, to whom General Conway delivered it at Reading, on the 11th of October, to this time, as far as it has affected me, and the officers of my family.

"That letter contained very judicious remarks upon that want of discipline which has often alarmed your excellency, and I believe all observing patriots. The reasons which, in his judgment, deprived us of the success we would reasonably expect, were methodically explained by him; but neither the weakness of any of our generals, nor "bad counsellors," were mentioned, and consequently cannot be assigned or imagined as part of those reasons to which General Conway attributed some of our losses. He wrote to me as a candid observer, as other officers in every service write to each other for obtaining better intelligence than that of newspapers, and that freedom renders such letters thus far confidential in some measure. The judgment of the person who received them points out to him, according to time and circumstances, the propriety or impropriety attending their being communicated when no particular injunction of secrecy was requested.

"Particular actions, rather than persons, were blamed, but with impartiality; and I am convinced that he did not aim at lessening, in my opinion, the merit of any person. His letter was perfectly harmless: however, now that various reports have been circulated concerning its contents, they ought not to be submitted to the solemn inspection of those who stand most high in the public esteem.

"Anxiety and jealousy would arise in the breast of

very respectable officers, who, rendered sensible of faults, which inexperience, and that alone, may have led them into, would be unnecessarily disgusted, if they perceived a probability of such errors being recorded.

"Honor forbids it, and patriotism demands, that I should return the letter into the hands of the writer. I will do it, but at the same time I declare that the paragraph conveyed to your excellency as a genuine part of it, was, in words as well as in substance, a wicked forgery.

"About the beginning of December I was informed that letter had occasioned an explanation between your excellency and that gentleman. Not knowing whether the whole letter or part of it had been stealingly copied, but fearing malice had altered its original features, I own, sir, that a dread of the mischiefs which might attend the forgery I suspected would be made, put me for some time in a most painful situation. When I communicated to the officers in my family the intelligence I had received, they all entreated me to rescue their characters from the suspicions they justly conceived themselves liable to until the guilty person should be known. To facilitate the discovery, I wrote your excellency; but unable to learn whether General Conway's letter had been transmitted to you by a member of Congress, or a gentleman in the army, I was afraid much time would be lost in the course of the inquiry, and that the States might receive some capital injury from the infidelity of the person, who, I thought, had stolen a copy of the obnoxious letter. Was it not probable that the secrets of the army might be attained and betrayed through the same means to the enemy?

"For this reason, sir, not doubting that Congress would most cheerfully concur with you in tracing out the criminal, I wrote to the president, and enclosed to him a copy of my letter to your excellency.

"About the same time I was forwarding these letters, Brigadier-general Wilkinson returned to Albany. I informed him of the treachery which had been committed, but I concealed from him the measures I was pursuing to unmask the author. Wilkinson answered, he was assured it never would come to light, and endeavored to fix my suspicions on Lieutenant-colonel Troup, who, said he, might have incautiously conversed on the substance of General Conway's letter with Colonel Hamilton, whom you had sent not long before to Albany. I did not listen to this insinuation against your aide-de-camp and mine.. [I* considered it ungenerous; but the light your excellency has just assisted me with exhibiting the many qualifications which are necessarily blended together by the head and heart of General Wilkinson, I would not omit this fact. It would enable your excellency to judge whether or not he would scruple to make such a forgery as that which he now stands charged with, and ought to be exemplarily punished. To attempt sowing dissensions among the principal officers of the army, and rendering them odious to each other by false suggestions and forgeries, is, in my opinion, a crime of the first magnitude, and involves with it all the consequences of positive treason. That the forgery now in view was machinated for injuring General Conway, and perhaps myself, in your judgment, is now evident to me; and I trust the detection will operate, as it ought to operate, upon your excellency, as well as the members of the Congress before whom your letter necessitates me to lay this answer. The station of the calumniator seems to justify your excellency for having believed till now that the extract was genuine: and yet, sir, I cannot help wishing you had sent me a copy of it im-

* The part within the brackets was in the original draft, and is so published by Wilkinson. It was omitted in the copy sent.

mediately after your explanation with General Conway.]

"Would that your excellency's prediction relative to him had not been inserted in your letter which came to me unsealed, through the hands of Congress. I hope always to find that gentleman a firm and constant friend to America. I never wrote to him in my life, but to satisfy his doubts concerning the exposure of his private letter, nor had any sort of intimacy, nor hardly the smallest acquaintance with him, before our meeting in this town."

An incident occurred at this time which marks the effect of Washington's reply to Gates. On the twentieth of January a resolution passed Congress, "that the members attending the business of the Board of War, inquire of General Gates whether he can go to camp, agreeably to his appointment, for the purpose expressed in the general resolution for reorganizing and reforming the army." In the afternoon of that day, the members reported "reasons assigned by Gates, why the members of that Board ought immediately to enter on the business of that department." They were forthwith excused proceeding to camp, Gates and Mifflin shrinking from being confronted by Washington. In their place, two of his known friends, Carroll and Gouverneur Morris, were appointed.

One of the first letters of Gates, after he took his seat at the Board was a complaint that he was ill lodged in an expensive tavern. This was at the time when Washington and his army were suffering at Valley Forge. Soon after, he signalized his recently attained eminence by a report in favor of an irruption into Canada. It invested the Board of War with complete authority to take every necessary measure for the execution of this scheme, under such general officers as Congress should appoint, and to apply for all necessary means. The following day the

general officers were appointed—La Fayette, Conway, Stark.

Conway, anxious to remove every impediment to his ambition, about this time wrote to Washington, assuring him that his letter had been returned by Gates, that he found "with great satisfaction, that the paragraph so much spoken of does not exist in the said letter, nor any thing like it." He meant, he wrote, "to have the letter published with the certificate of General Gates, but he was prevented by President Laurens and some other members, who were of opinion that such a measure would inform the enemy of a misunderstanding among the American generals." He pronounced it "a forgery." Not convinced by his precise assurance, this extraordinary attempt, after the admission of Gates in his previous letter, to induce the belief that the extract was a forgery, and a forgery perpetrated by Wilkinson, a member of his own staff, received this comment from the commander-in-chief, in a reply to Gates of the ninth of February.

"I was duly favored with your letter of the 23d last month, to which I should have replied sooner, had I not been delayed by business that required my more immediate attention.

"It is my wish to give implicit credit to the assurances of every gentleman; but on the subject of our present correspondence, I am sorry to confess, there happen to be some unlucky circumstances which involuntarily compel me to consider the discovery you mention not so satisfactory and conclusive as you seem to think it.*

* In a private letter from Washington to Jay, written by Hamilton, dated April 14, 1779, he observes: "I discovered, very early in the war, symptoms of coldness and constraint in General Gates' behavior to me. These increased as he rose into greater consequence, but we did not come to a direct breach till the beginning of last year. This was occasioned by a correspondence, which

"I am so unhappy as to find no small difficulty in reconciling the spirit and import of your different letters, and sometimes the different parts of the same letter with each other.

"It is not unreasonable to presume, that your first information of my having notice of General Conway's letter, came from himself; there were very few in the secret, and it is natural to suppose, that he being immediately concerned, would be the most interested to convey the intelligence to you. It is also far from improbable, that he acquainted you with the substance of the passage communicated to me; one would expect this if he believed it to be spurious, in order to ascertain the imposition and evince his innocence, especially as he seemed to be under some uncertainty as to the precise contents of what he had written, when I signified my knowledge of the matter to him. If he neglected doing it, the omission cannot easily be interpreted into any thing else than a consciousness of the reality of the extract, if not literally, at least substantially. If he did not neglect it, it must appear somewhat strange that the forgery remained so long undetected, and that your first letter to me from Albany, of the eighth of December, should tacitly recognise the genuineness of the paragraph in question; while your only concern at that time seemed to be, the 'tracing out the author of the infidelity, which put extracts of General Conway's letters into my hands.' Throughout the whole of that letter, the reality of the extracts is, by the fairest

I thought made rather free with me, between him and General Conway, which accidentally came to my knowledge. The particulars of this affair you will find delineated in the packet herewith, endorsed 'Papers respecting General Conway.' Besides the evidence contained in them of the genuineness of the offensive correspondence, *I have other proofs still more convincing, which, having been given me in a confidential way, I am not at liberty to impart.*"

implication, allowed, and your only solicitude was to find out the person who brought them to light. After making the most earnest pursuit of the author of the supposed treachery, without saying a word about the truth or falsehood of the passage, your letter of the twenty-third ultimo, to my great surprise, proclaims it in words, as well as substance, a 'wicked forgery.'

"It is not my intention to contradict this assertion, but only to intimate some considerations, which tend to induce a supposition, that though none of General Conway's letters to you contain the offensive passage mentioned, there might have been something in them too nearly related to it, that could give such an extraordinary alarm. It may be said, if this were not the case, how easy, in the first instance, to declare there was nothing exceptionable in them, and to have produced the letters themselves in support of them? This may be thought the most proper and effectual way of refuting misrepresentations, and removing all suspicion. The propriety of the objections suggested against submitting them to inspection, may very well be questioned; the various reports circulated concerning their contents were, perhaps, so many arguments for making them speak for themselves, to place the matter upon the footing of certainty. Concealment, in an affair which had made so much noise, though not by my means, will naturally lead men to conjecture the worst, and it will be a subject of speculation even to candor itself. The anxiety and jealousy you apprehend from revealing the letter, will be very apt to be increased by suppressing it. It may be asked, why not submit to inspection a performance perfectly harmless, and of course conceived in terms of proper caution and delicacy? Why suppose that "anxiety and jealousy" would have arisen in the breasts of very respectable officers, or that

they would have been necessarily disgusted at being made sensible of their faults when related with judgment and impartiality by a candid observer? Surely they could not have been unreasonable enough to take offence at a performance so perfectly inoffensive, 'blaming actions rather than persons,' which have evidently no connection with one another, and indulgently 'recording the errors of inexperience.'

"You are pleased to consider General Conway's letters as of a confidential nature, observing, that 'time and circumstances must point out the propriety or impropriety of communicating such letters.' Permit me to inquire, whether, when there is an impropriety in communication, it is only applicable with respect to the parties who are the subject of them? One might be led to imagine this to be the case, from your having admitted others into the secret of your confidential correspondence, at the same time that you thought it ineligible it should be trusted to those officers whose actions underwent its scrutiny. Your not knowing whether the letter under consideration 'came to me from a member of Congress or from an officer,' plainly indicates that you had originally communicated it to at least one of that honorable body; and I learn from General Conway, that before his late arrival at York-Town, it had been committed to the perusal of several of its members, and was afterwards shown by himself to three more. It is somewhat difficult to conceive a reason founded in generosity, for imparting the free and confidential strictures of this ingenuous censor on the operations of the army under my command, to a member of Congress; but, perhaps, 'time and circumstances pointed it out.' It must be indeed acknowledged, that the faults of very respectable officers, not less injurious for being the result of inexperience, were not im-

proper topics to engage the attention of members of Congress.

"It is, however, greatly to be lamented that this adept in military science did not employ his abilities in the progress of the campaign, in pointing out those wise measures which were calculated to give us 'that degree of success we might reasonably expect.' The United States have lost much by that unseasonable diffidence, which prevented his embracing the numerous opportunities he had in council, of displaying those rich treasures of knowledge and experience he has since so freely laid open to you. I will not do him the injustice to impute the penurious reserve, which ever appeared in him on such occasions, to any other cause than an excess of modesty; neither will I suppose he possesses no other merit than of that kind of sagacity, which qualifies a man better for profound discoveries of errors that have been committed, and advantages that have been lost, than for the exercise of that foresight and provident discernment, which enable him to avoid the one and anticipate the other; but, willing as I am to subscribe to all his pretensions, and believe that his remarks on the operations of the campaign were very judicious, and that he has sagaciously descanted on many things that might have been done, I cannot help being a little sceptical as to his ability to have found out the means of accomplishing them, or to prove the sufficiency of those in our possession. These minutiæ, I suspect, he did not think worth his attention, particularly as they might not be within the compass of his views.

"Notwithstanding the hopeful presages you are pleased to figure to yourself of General Conway's firm and constant friendship to America, I cannot persuade myself to retract the prediction concerning him, which you so emphatically wish had not been inserted in my last. A

better acquaintance with him than I have reason to think you have had, from what you say, and a concurrence of circumstances oblige me to give him but little credit for the qualities of his heart, of which, at least, I beg leave to assume the privilege of being a tolerable judge. Were it necessary, more instances than one might be adduced from his behavior and conversation, to manifest that he is capable of all the malignity of detraction, and all the meanness of intrigue, to gratify the absurd resentment of disappointed vanity, or to answer the purposes of personal aggrandizement, and promote the interest of a faction."

To this severe sarcasm, which no man conscious of his innocence would have brooked, General Gates gave the following submissive reply.

"I yesterday had the honor to receive your excellency's letter of the 9th instant, and earnestly hope no more of that time, so precious to the public, may be lost upon the subject of General Conway's letter. Whether that gentleman does or does not deserve the suspicions you express, would be entirely indifferent to me, did he not possess an office of high rank in the army of the United States; for that reason solely, I wish he may answer all the expectations of Congress.

"As to the gentleman, I have no personal connection with him, nor had I any correspondence previous to his writing the letter which has given offence, nor have I since written to him, save to certify what I know to be the contents of the letter. He, therefore, must be responsible;—as I heartily dislike controversy, even upon my own account, and much more in a matter wherein I was only accidentally concerned. In regard to the parts of your excellency's letter addressed particularly to me, I solemnly declare that I am of no faction, and if any of my letters,

taken aggregately or by paragraphs, convey any meaning which, in any construction, is offensive to your excellency, that was by no means the intention of the writer. After this, I cannot believe your excellency will either suffer your suspicions, or the prejudices of others, to induce you to spend another moment upon the subject."

The communications with Gates were closed on the twenty-fourth February, seventeen hundred and seventy-eight, with a dignified assent to his humble proposition to bury all that had passed in oblivion.

"I yesterday received your favor of the nineteenth instant. I am as averse to controversy as any man; and had I not been forced into it, you never would have had occasion to impute to me even a shadow of a disposition towards it. Your repeatedly and solemnly disclaiming any offensive views in these matters which have been the subject of our past correspondence, makes me willing to close with the desire you express, of burying them hereafter in silence; and, as far as future events will permit, oblivion.

"My temper leads me to peace and harmony with all men; and it is particularly my wish to avoid any personal feuds or dissensions with those who are embarked in the same great national contest with myself; as every difference of this kind must in its consequences be injurious."

This correspondence, while it defeated the machinations of the faction, was a source of gratification to Hamilton, not merely as a vindication of the commander-in-chief, but of his own wantonly assailed character.

The projected invasion of Canada which was to crown Gates with honor, failed in a most unexpected manner. "Among the general attacks upon the confidential friends of Washington," La Fayette relates,* "for

* MS. Memoir of Gen. La Fayette.

it would have been too unpopular to have indulged in open attacks upon him personally, in which his pretended incapacity had rendered the campaign in the South so different from that in the North, under a general conversant with European tactics, and the much lamented influence of such men as Greene, Knox, and Hamilton, over the subjugated mind of the commander-in-chief, were artfully suggested and circulated, it had not been deemed expedient to include La Fayette. A better use, it was supposed, might be made of his growing popularity with the country, and of his correspondence with his friends in Europe."

With this view, though then but twenty years of age, only six months in America, and without military knowledge or experience, the selection had been made. The prospect of glory and the pride of a separate command, it was supposed, would dazzle his youthful ardent mind, and tempt him to become a partisan of the faction, while the conduct of the enterprise would in fact devolve upon Conway.

The deportment of the Board of War towards Washington was marked. The official letter of Gates to La Fayette was transmitted through the hands of the commander-in-chief without an explanation. On the delivery of the packet to La Fayette, Washington simply observed: "Since it is to be so, I had rather it was you than any body else."

La Fayette states, that "struck with the proffered opportunity of counteracting a measure, the tendency of which was not less injurious to the cause, than invidious to his paternal friend, under the pretence that it was necessary for him to visit Congress to arrange the measures for the expedition, he proceeded immediately to Yorktown. There he omitted no arguments with Gates,

and in his conferences with Laurens, the President of Congress, to convince them that the whole charge of the military operations should be under the control of the commander-in-chief. Finding that his views were little in accordance with the intentions of the faction, he firmly resisted the temptations offered by the glory and facilities of an independent command; and stated, that considering himself as one of Washington's family, he could not accept the trust except on the condition that he should act under Washington's immediate orders."

To this proposal, the Board of War were compelled to accede; and, at the request of La Fayette, De Kalb, a senior officer to Conway, was attached to the command. La Fayette, after a conference with Washington, proceeded to Albany. There, in pursuance of the instructions of the Board of War, he ought to have found a body of two thousand five hundred men, besides militia, at the Cohoes, and all the means "of acting on the ice on Lake Champlain and burning the British flotilla, whence he was to proceed to Montreal." Conway had preceded him. "His first words were, that the expedition was quite impossible." Schuyler, Lincoln and Arnold had all expressed the same opinion. "I have consulted every body," La Fayette writes,* "and every body answers it would be madness. I have been deceived by the Board of War. I do not believe I can find twelve hundred fit for duty, and the greatest part of these are naked even for a summer campaign. I was to find General Stark with a large body; and indeed General Gates told me, '*General Stark will have burnt the fleet before your arrival.*' Well, the first letter I receive in Albany is from General Stark, who wishes to know 'what number of men, from where, for what time, and for what rendezvous *I desire*

* La Fayette to Washington, Feb. 19, 1778.

him to raise. Colonel Biddle, who was to raise men, would have done something *had he received money.*'"

Greatly mortified, La Fayette wrote Washington: "I fancy the actual scheme is to have me out of this part of the continent, and General Conway as chief, under the immediate direction of Gates." La Fayette was rewarded for his alacrity by the thanks of Congress, and retained the command of the northern department during the residue of the winter. The project having exploded, Conway was ordered to repair to the post at Peekskill under McDougall.

The faction now crumbled to pieces. "We have determined," Gouverneur Morris wrote to Washington, "to send Gates to Hudson River, where he is to command largely. But he is to receive instructions, which shall be proper. You are directed to call a council of major-generals" (those in Pennsylvania), "in which the chief engineer is *officially* to be a member, and to which, by a subsequent resolution, Generals Gates and Mifflin were *ordered* to repair. As these gentlemen ought not to receive orders *immediately* from Congress, they are, as you will see, permitted to leave the Board of War upon *your* order." This amendment was acquiesced in unanimously. Mifflin was soon after ordered to join the main army. "I was not a little surprised," Washington writes, "to find a certain gentleman, who, some time ago, when a cloud of darkness hung heavy over us, and our affairs looked gloomy, was desirous of resigning, to be now stepping forward in the line of the army. But if he can reconcile such conduct to his own feelings as an officer and a man of honor, and Congress has no objection to his leaving his seat in another department, I have nothing personally to oppose to it."—"I am told that Conway, from whom I have received another impertinent letter, *demanding* the

command of a division of the continental army, is, through the medium of his friends, soliciting his commission again. Can this be? and if so, will it be granted?"

Conway had been ordered from Peekskill to Albany. Thence he wrote to Congress: "What is the meaning of removing me from the scene of action on the opening of a campaign? I did not deserve this burlesque disgrace, and my honor will not permit me to bear it. It is not becoming the dignity of Congress to give such usage to an officer of my age and rank." He tendered his resignation. Morris avowed his satisfaction, his joy, at the receipt of this letter. Panegyric dwindled to apology, and no opposition was made.* Conway had little expectation of this result. He wrote to Congress "that he had no thoughts of resigning," and also to his patron. Gates applied to Congress in his behalf: "I hope Congress will not think me importunate when I say, I wish the only gentleman who has left France with the rank of a colonel of foot should not be returned to his prince and nation in any other manner than such as becomes the gratitude, honor and dignity of the United States." The exhortation was vain. Conway then repaired to Yorktown, whence he wrote to Gates, "I never had a sufficient idea of cabals until I reached this place. My reception, you may imagine, was not a warm one. I must except Mr. Samuel Adams, Colonel Richard Henry Lee, and a few others who are attached to you, but who cannot oppose the torrent. One Mr. Carroll, on whose friendship I depended, is one of the hottest." "The New York gang,"† writes a tool of Gates, "has reached the

* G. M. to Washington, May 21, 1778. The vote on the journal shows only four members in his favor, to twenty-three—Gerry of Massachusetts, Chase of Maryland, R. H. Lee and Bannister, of Virginia.

† Duer and G. Morris.

height of ascendency, but they will be the more effectually crushed in their fall if intrepidity and prudence join in the virtuous purpose of breaking them. They well know their reign is but short, if we make a good use of our senses." Conway, soon after, wounded in a duel with Cadwallader, wrote Washington a penitent letter; and on his recovery left the United States.

As a closing scene in the fate of the cabal, a resolution of Congress declared "that alarming consequences are likely to ensue from a longer delay of appointing proper persons to fill the quartermaster-general's department; that the committee at camp, in conjunction with General Washington, be authorized forthwith to make proper appointments." The arrangement of this department, as framed by the Board of War, was abandoned. General Greene was appointed, retaining his rank in the line, in place of Mifflin. An inquiry being ordered into his conduct, Mifflin sought to avoid it, but, after full deliberation, Washington was directed to convene a court-martial. Delicacy, probably, delayed his acting upon this resolution, lest it should be ascribed to personal animosity. The subject was resumed in Congress, and, after serious charges, Washington was directed to proceed with the inquiry. Mifflin, who had previously tendered his resignation, was soon after permitted to resign.

An occurrence took place during the short dominance of this cabal which distinctly marked their object. Gordon,* who is seen to have been on most intimate relations with Gates, five days after the appointment of the supervisory committee of which Gates was to be the head, wrote to Washington in order to ascertain the impression their plots had made upon him. Ignorant of his relations

* Wm. Gordon, D. D., author of the "History of the Independence of the United States."

with Gates, and unsuspicious of the object, Washington answered:* "I can assure you, that no person ever heard me drop an expression that had a tendency to resignation. The same principles that led me to embark in the opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain, operate with additional force at this day; nor is it my desire to withdraw my services while they are considered of importance in the present contest; but to report a design of this kind is among the arts which those who are endeavoring to effect a change, are practising to bring it to pass.

"I have said, and I do still say, that there is not an officer in the service of the United States, that would return to the sweets of domestic life with more heartfelt joy than I should. But I would have this declaration accompanied by these sentiments, that, while the public are satisfied with my endeavors, I mean not to shrink from the cause. But the moment her voice, not that of faction, calls upon me to resign, I shall do it with as much pleasure as ever the wearied traveller retired to rest."

In this dark background of American history how bold the relief in which Washington stands forth! No injustice, no wrong, no calumny, no clamor, no contumely could make him falter a moment in his duty. He knew his motives of action, and this knowledge sustained him amid all his dangers and all his difficulties, pressing as they were.

"With grief and shame," a southern member of Congress wrote in seventy-five, "it must be confessed, that the whole blame lies not with the army. You will find your hands *straitened*, instead of *strengthened*."†—"I have thought," Washington writes to Reed in seventy-six with

* Feb. 15, 1778. Answer to letter Jan. 12, previous.

† Lynch to Washington.

confiding earnestness, "how much happier I should have been, if, instead of accepting the command under such circumstances, I had taken my musket on my shoulder and entered the ranks; or, *if I could have justified the measure to posterity and my own conscience*, had retired to the back country, and lived in a wigwam."—"I see," he wrote the President of Congress late in the same year, "I see such a distrust and jealousy of military power, that the commander-in-chief has not the opportunity, even by recommendation, to give the least assurances of reward for the most essential services."—"To criminate the authors of our errors," Robert Morris writes him, "would not avail, but we cannot see ruin staring us in the face without thinking of them."—"I agree with you," Washington replied, at the moment * before the victory of Trenton, "that it is in vain to ruminate upon, or even reflect upon the authors or causes of our present misfortunes; we should rather exert ourselves and look forward with hopes that some lucky chance may yet turn up in our favor."—"Your observations," he again wrote to him, "on the want of many capital characters in that senate, are but too just. However, our cause is good, and I hope Providence will support it."

And when the cabal against him was at its height, he answers a new delegate in Congress from Virginia: † "Nothing short of independence, it appears to me, can possibly do. A peace on other terms would be, if I may be allowed the expression, a peace of war. 'The indecision of Congress' is one point, the other is the *jealousy* which Congress unhappily entertain of the army, and which, if some reports are right, some members labor to establish. If we would pursue a right system of policy,

* Dec. 26, 1777. † Washington to Bannister, April 21.

in my opinion, there should be none of these distinctions. We should all, Congress and army, be considered as one people, embarked in one cause, in one interest, acting on the same principle, to the same end. The distinctions, the jealousies set up, or perhaps only incautiously let out, can answer not a single good purpose. They are impolitic in the extreme. The very jealousy which the narrow policy of some may affect to entertain of the army, in order to a due subordination to the supreme civil authority, is a likely means to produce a contrary effect. No history now extant can furnish an instance of an army's suffering such uncommon hardships as ours has done, and bearing them with the same patience and fortitude."

All history shows how much easier it is to engender suspicion than to inspire confidence, and when the former fails, the failure best proves how deserved the confidence is.

The sufferings of the army necessarily gave rise to not a little discontent. The powerful motives which influenced Washington to hold, amid such exposure and privation, a position near the enemy, might not be duly estimated; and the cabal supposed, that an impression unfavorable to the commander-in-chief could easily be extended among the ranks.

At the same time, to win them to favor Congress, in their plot to elevate Gates, a resolution was passed, granting to each soldier in laudatory terms, a month's extra pay, as earnest of future liberality. But neither artifice nor favor could wean their affections from Washington. They saw his labors and privations; they felt his solicitude for their welfare; they gloried in the courage which had often borne him before them in the foremost perils of battle. His steadiness they regarded as their surest reliance, and amid every trial and every disappointment, their

confidence turned towards him, using an expressive, familiar epithet.*

Though the army could not be seduced, nor the great interests of the country be sacrificed by this cabal, great injuries resulted from it.

La Fayette saw the mischief, and anxiously deprecated the dissensions among the commissioners abroad, and the contentions at home.

It may be seen, that the same persons who caused the variances among the public agents in Europe, degrading this country in the estimate of foreign powers, were members of this cabal, weakening its influence and jeoparding its interests at home. They caused Europe to pause in offices of friendship to the United States, and created a distrust in the United States of the aid they were in want. They clamored against a single military chief and a standing army as dangerous to liberty ; and caused the danger, by insufficient exertions of adequate power, thus producing the emergencies that created the necessity of conferring dictatorial authority.

This attempt to unveil the counsels of the secret conclave which doomed Washington to disgrace, and, if successful, would, in all probability, have reversed the revolution, has unavoidably been imperfect, but enough of truth is gleaned to indicate the path of inquiry. Sufficient evidence exists to show, that while Pennsylvania was chilled and dissatisfied under the immediate presence of the enemy, the votes of Maryland, of North Carolina, and of Georgia divided ; his native Virginia misrepresented ; the powerful influence of New England marshalled under adverse leaders ; that New York, with her only seaport in the hands of the enemy, her temporary seat of government and her mountain fortresses in ashes, bands of rob-

* "The old hos,"—the old horse.—*Hist. Collections of Virginia.*

bers roaming along her western border, her frontier people flying in pale affright from Indian barbarities, just relieved from subjugation by the capitulation of Burgoyne, thus wounded, suffering, almost exhausted, maintained all her constancy and all her firmness.

Justice to those patriots who resisted and ultimately defeated this cabal, would seem to require that the persons who composed it should be indicated. But as the removal of the commander-in-chief was never brought to a direct question, and as the votes on several of the prominent acts are not recorded, much must remain in uncertainty. Of his supporters in Congress, Morris, Duer and Carroll were foremost. Of his opponents, the Lees and the Adamses were regarded as the most conspicuous.* As to the former, the allegation has been denied, and of the part taken by John Adams, who was nominated at its height a commissioner to France, but partial glimpses have, until recently, been caught.

What now is known is chiefly derived from his own writings and the recent narrative of his life. He speaks of himself, when arrived at manhood, as "teacher of a grammar school in Wooster," from which meritorious effort, he earned "a loose and scanty subsistence, his compensation little above that of a common day laborer," † says, that he had thoughts of preaching, but was deterred by his "experience of that order of men, and of the real

* Edward Rutledge to John Jay: "I fear, with some reason, that a d—d infamous cabal is forming against our commander-in-chief, and that whenever they find themselves strong enough, they will strike an important blow. Recollect the indirect attempts that were repeatedly made against the command and reputation of poor Schuyler, and the fatal stab that was at last aimed at both; and let us be taught how necessary it is to oppose a cabal in its infancy. Were it in my power, I would stifle it in its birth. Conway, the Lees, and Adamses, are said to be at the bottom of this, besides an abundance of snakes that are concealed in the grass."

† Works of Adams, i. 22.

design of that institution." * He then prepared himself for the profession of the law, in which he was somewhat distinguished. His manners at this period of his life he thus describes, "I have insensibly fallen into a habit of affecting wit and humor, of shrugging my shoulders, and moving, distorting the muscles of my face. My motions are stiff and uneasy, ungraceful, and my attention is unsteady and irregular." † These peculiarities, time and care, in a degree, corrected. Of his temper he states a short time before he entered Congress, "I found the old warmth, heat, violence, acrimony, bitterness, sharpness of my temper and expression, was not departed." ‡ Nor did they ever depart.

These manners and qualities were little suited to the courteous suavity of the gentry of the middle and southern colonies with whom he was called to act. "The man," he said of himself, "who has no better government of his tongue, no more command of his temper, is unfit for every thing but children's play, and the company of boys." The effect was soon apparent. But the defects of his character were deeper than he had either discovered or chose to disclose.

Letters written by him, derogatory to a leading member of that body who had eloquently vindicated the rights of the colonies, censuring its tardy action, and revealing its proceedings, intercepted by the enemy, came back upon him; and, as these proceedings were under a most solemn injunction of secrecy, convicted him of a gross breach of faith. The day after these letters were received, a secret committee was raised, and each colony of New England was represented in it, except Massachusetts.§ He had previously alienated Hancock,

* Works of Adams, i. 36.
† Ibid. i. 47.
‡ Ibid. ii. 308.
§ Ibid. i. 183.

he now incurred the lasting contempt and hostility of Dickinson, and became an object of general "detestation." * His overweening love of self never forsook him. When beholding the departure of Washington, Lee and Schuyler, "for the American camp at Boston," and the honors paid to them, he writes: "Such is the pride and pomp of war. I, poor creature, worn out with scribbling for my bread and my liberty, low in spirits and weak in health, must leave others to wear the laurels which I have sown, others to eat the bread which I have earned, a common case." † A member of Congress from South Carolina ‡ writes to Washington, then at the head of the army at Cambridge, pointing to John Adams: "One of our members sets out to-day for New England. Whether his intents be wicked or not, I doubt much. *He should be watched.*" Groundless as this suspicion was, it shows the impression he had made on the minds of honorable men.

His opinions as to the policy to be observed in respect to the army, are given by himself, then chairman of the Board of War. "I am much at a loss whether it would not be the best policy to leave every colony to raise its own troops, to clothe them, to pay them, to furnish them with tents, and indeed with every thing but provisions, fuel and forage. The project of abolishing provincial distinctions was introduced with a good intention, I believe, at first, but, I think, it will do no good upon the whole." §

* Dr. Rush states, "I saw this gentleman walk the streets of Philadelphia alone, after the publication of his intercepted letters in our newspapers, in 1775, an object of *nearly universal scorn and detestation.*"—*Adams' Works*, ii. 513—note.

† Letters of J. Adams to Mrs. Adams, 29.

‡ Adams' Works, i. 192. Lynch to Washington.

§ Adams to General Greene.—*Adams' Works*, ix. 403. June 22, 1776.

And as to the appointment of officers, he wrote, "If you leave the appointment of officers to the general or to the Congress, it will not be so well done as if left to the assemblies." * Such were his ideas in seventy-six. Another year shows the consummation of his "visionary notions." † "I hope, for my own part, that Congress will elect annually *all* the general officers. If in consequence of this, *some great men* should be obliged at the year's end to go home and serve their country in some other capacity, not less necessary, and better adapted to their genius, I do not think the public would be ruined. Perhaps it would be no harm." ‡

With this view he joined warmly in the plot to elevate Gates. "History had no lesson to prompt confidence in 'Washington,' and, on the other hand, it was full of warnings. In this light, the attempt, whilst organizing another army in the north, to raise up a *second chief* as a resource, in case of failure with the first, must be viewed as a measure, not without much precautionary wisdom. The conception, probably, belonged to Samuel Adams, who, in the absence of his kinsman, had been added to the Board of War; but *it was actively promoted by both.*" Such is the language of his biographer.§ His preference of State troops, of State appointments of officers, and of "annual generals," show the bias of his mind, and are in accordance with an opinion soon after expressed. "Government and law in the States, large taxation and strict discipline in our armies, are the *only things* wanting as human means." ‖ These could not exist without government and laws pervading the whole United States. This great want, and only remedy, were not in his contemplation.

* Adams to Knox.—*Ibid.* i. 257.
† Hamilton's Works, vii. 689.
‡ Adams' Works, i. 263.
§ Ibid. i. 265.
‖ Ibid. i. 268.

A principal agency in this cabal is truly ascribed to Samuel Adams, in energy and steadiness of purpose far the superior of his kinsman; and whose early services, zeal and proscription, have imparted to him a singular interest.

Born with all the qualities to aid in subverting an established government, this determined man was devoid of those necessary to build one up. Proceeding on the principle that all confidence is unsafe, he labored to confine the powers of the confederacy within the narrowest limits, and opposed with obstinacy every effort to enlarge them.

This spirit of indiscriminate distrust darkened all his counsels, and was combined with a fanaticism which disregarded experience, and undervalued human agency. Thus, in the most alarming periods of the Revolution, when the condition of the country ought to have unchained his mind,—while he cheered the hesitating with reiterated appeals to Providence,* he opposed long enlistments, from an apprehension of standing armies, and contended for a rotation in command, on the ground that if the precedent were once established, "no military chief-

* An instance of this kind is related of this more than ordinary man, who led on the bold by his courage, and stirred up the tranquil by his arts; and who, though himself the victim of superstition, was not the less aware how deep its sources spring in the human breast. At a moment when Congress was sitting disheartened and hesitating, the arrival of a vessel with military stores from France was announced. Availing himself of this intelligence, he arose from his seat, and exclaiming with extended arms—"It is a sign from Heaven! Providence,—Providence is on our side!" dissipated the doubts of those around him. With the same sublimated feeling, when an unlimited price was offered him by an agent of the king, he replied, in a determined manner: "I trust I have long since made my peace with the King of kings. No personal consideration shall induce me to abandon the righteous cause of my country. Tell Governor Gage, 'It is the advice of Samuel Adams to him to insult no longer the feelings of an exasperated people.'"

tain could ever take a flight beyond the reach of vengeance."

With these doctrines, he swayed for a time the councils of the Congress of seventeen hundred and seventy-seven, which he characterized "as the smallest but truest Congress they ever had." He had succeeded in supplanting Schuyler by Gates, and meditated a similar doom to Washington.

Other views were entertained of this Congress. Gouverneur Morris, a member of it, writes to Jay: "The mighty senate of America is not what you have known it." Laurens, its President, says, * "a most shameful deficiency in this branch is the greatest evil, and is, indeed, the source of almost all our evils. If there is not speedily a *resurrection* of *able men*, and of that virtue which I thought to be genuine in seventy-five, we are gone. We shall undo ourselves." "A horrid faction," Greene writes,† "has been forming to ruin his Excellency, and others. Ambition, how boundless! Ingratitude, how prevalent! See upon what a monstrous principle, the general is persecuted."

A similar opinion was disclosed by Hamilton to Governor Clinton in these earnest terms: ‡

"There is a matter which often obtrudes itself upon my mind, and which requires the attention of every person of sense and influence among us; I mean a degeneracy of representation in the great council of America. It is a melancholy truth, sir, the effects of which we daily see, and feel, that there is not so much wisdom in a certain body as there ought to be, and as the success of our affairs absolutely demands. Many members of it are, no doubt, men in every respect fit for the trust; but this cannot be said of it as a body. Folly,

* Jan. 27, 1778. † Feb. 7, 1778. ‡ Feb. 13, 1778.

caprice, a want of foresight, comprehension and dignity, characterize the general tenor of their actions. Of this, I dare say, you are sensible, though you have not perhaps so many opportunities of knowing it as I have. Their conduct, with respect to the army especially, is fickle, indecisive, and improvident; insomuch that we are reduced to a more terrible situation than you can conceive. False and contracted views of economy have prevented them, though repeatedly urged to it, from making that provision for officers, which was requisite to interest them in the service. This has produced such carelessness and indifference to the service, as is subversive of every officer-like quality. They have disgusted the army by repeated instances of the most whimsical favoritism in their promotions; and by an absurd prodigality of rank to foreigners, and to the meanest staff of the army. They have not been able to summon resolution enough to withstand the impudent importunity and vain boasting of foreign pretenders; but have manifested such a ductility and inconstancy in their proceedings, as will warrant the charge of suffering themselves to be bullied by every petty adventurer who comes armed with ostentatious pretensions of military merit and experience. Would you believe it, sir? it is become almost proverbial in the mouths of the French officers and other foreigners, that they have nothing more to do, to obtain whatever they please, than to assume a high tone, and assert their own merit with confidence and perseverance. These things wound my feelings as a republican more than I can express, and in some degree make me contemptible in my own eyes.

"America once had a representation that would do honor to any age or nation. The present falling off is very alarming and dangerous. What is the cause, and

how is it to be remedied? are questions that the welfare of these States requires should be well attended to. The great men who composed our first council,—are they dead, have they deserted the cause, or what has become of them? Very few are dead, and still fewer have deserted the cause; they are all, except the few who still remain in Congress, either in the field or in the civil offices of their respective States; for the greater part are engaged in the latter. The only remedy then is, to take them out of these employments, and return them to the place where their presence is infinitely more important.

"Each State, in order to promote its own internal government and prosperity, has selected its best members to fill the offices within itself, and conduct its own affairs. Men have been fonder of the emoluments and conveniences of being employed at home; and local attachment falsely operating, has made them more provident for the particular interests of the States to which they belonged, than for the common interests of the confederacy. This is a most pernicious mistake, and must be corrected. However important it is to give form and efficiency to your interior constitutions and police, it is infinitely more important to have a wise general council; otherwise a failure of the measures of the Union will overturn all your labors for the advancement of your particular good, and ruin the common cause. You should not beggar the councils of the United States to enrich the administration of the several members. Realize to yourselves the consequences of having a Congress despised at home and abroad. How can the common force be exerted, if the power of collecting it be put in weak, foolish and unsteady hands? How can we hope for success in our European negotiations, if the nations of Europe have no confidence in the wisdom and vigor of the great conti-

nental government? This is the object on which their eyes are fixed; hence it is, America will derive its importance or insignificance in their estimation.

"You and I had some conversation when I had the pleasure of seeing you last, with respect to the existence of a certain faction. Since I saw you, I have discovered such convincing traits of the monster, that I cannot doubt its reality in the most extensive sense. I dare say you have seen and heard enough to settle the matter in your own mind. I believe it unmasked its batteries too soon, and begins to hide its head; but as I imagine it will only change the storm to a sap, all the true and sensible friends to their country, and of course to a certain great man, ought to be upon the watch to counterplot the secret machinations of his enemies."

CHAPTER XV.

The greater the lethargy of Congress, the more earnest were the solicitations of Washington. Yielding to these, and to the necessity, as indicated in the late campaign, of more efficient measures for the organization of the army, they at last entered effectively upon this duty.

Rarely, indeed, were a people less prepared for a contest of arms than the American colonists at the beginning of the Revolution. Without either soldiers, generals, or engineers, without munitions* or a knowledge of war, all were to be attained by exertion or experience, and every thing to be surmounted by energy or fortitude.

Of the few who had reaped military information in the war with France, Washington was the only American who had obtained an extensive reputation. Eminent as were the soldierly qualities he then displayed, his experience was too limited to entitle him to the chief command; and upon the large scale on which the war was to be conducted, he had almost all its science to learn.

Philip Schuyler, known as Colonel Schuyler, was the only other member of the Congress of seventy-five who had any pretensions to the character of a soldier. The

* May 11, 1776. The lead was torn from the roofs of the Exchange and City Hall for bullets, and every article of brass taken from the houses in N. Y.

capacity in which he had previously served, had given him an accurate knowledge of the civil departments of an army, but beyond this his attainments did not extend. Such other information as he possessed were the acquisitions of an active mind, fruitful in resource, and of great vigor. To them the arrangement of the military establishment, as has been stated, was confided by Congress. The first object of attention, after filling the general staff, was the organization of the militia. All the inhabitants of the colonies fit for duty, as related, were recommended to form military associations, one-fourth of whom were to be minute men, distributed into battalions and companies, to be relieved by new drafts, after a tour of four months' duty. The field officers were to be appointed by the conventions of the respective States. Those of each company to be elected by the respective companies.

Such was the embryo of an army destined to win the liberty of an extensive empire. The first enlistments under a resolution of Congress, were of "expert riflemen." In the form of the enlistment they were declared to be soldiers in "The American continental army." The term was one year. In the commission of Washington it was designated as "The army of the United Colonies," and in its organization it assumed the simple national name of "The American army."

In the autumn of that year, a "new army" was ordered to be raised of twenty thousand three hundred and seventy-two men intended to lie before Boston. The number of each of the twenty-eight regiments was specified, to be organized into eight companies, each with four commissioned and eight non-commissioned officers. The term of the enlistment was to the end of the year seventy-six. The previous regulations were modified. A body of

five thousand more was directed to be mustered for the protection of New York; and nine battalions were to be raised and maintained for the defence of Canada. The field-officers of this army were usually recommended by the conventions of the respective States in which the troops were raised, and were elected by Congress. For the support of these troops, Washington was to be empowered by the several States to impress whatever might be necessary, and was authorized to call forth, according to the exigency and nature of the service, the minute men, or militia.

The enlistments under this arrangement gave little assurance of success in creating an efficient force. The spirit of the people brought them into the field upon emergencies, but there were few, in the independent condition of the colonists, of that order of men who would, of choice, endure the privations of a military life, augmented, as they were, by the defects of a new and very imperfect establishment.

The prejudices of the country were strong against any thing in the shape of a standing army. These prejudices, and the hope of an accommodation with Great Britain, had led to a limitation of the term of enlistment to one year. The militia, upon whom the chief dependence was placed, were in vain required to be governed by the articles of war. The power conferred upon Washington by Congress of calling forth the militia of the States—a power limited to exigencies—was regarded with such jealousy, that within a month after it was granted, Congress found it necessary to declare, that it was only to be exerted with the consent of the colonial authorities.

During the ensuing winter more effective measures were taken; of these, the division of the colonies into military departments was among the first, nor did it prove

to be the wisest, and was virtually abandoned. Those north of Virginia were to compose the northern, the remainder the southern, while from a desire of keeping the operations in that quarter distinct, Canada formed a third department.

The hope of an adjustment with Great Britain having ceased, and looking to independence, Massachusetts and Connecticut were, in the spring of seventy-six, recommended by Congress to endeavor to have their battalions enlisted for a term of two years. New York being menaced, thirteen thousand eight hundred of the militia of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, were called out to reinforce the army there, and a flying camp of ten thousand from Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland, was ordered to be immediately established in the middle colonies. This was soon followed by an augmentation, to the number of four thousand, of the men destined for the northern department, and by an order to enlist a regiment of riflemen for a term of three years, who were to receive a bounty. A battalion of Germans was also to be raised, together with a small body of troops for the defence of Georgia.

Wide as was their scope, these were all temporary expedients. The result of the contest on Long Island proved the little reliance to be placed on militia, for any other purpose than as occasional auxiliaries.

After a protracted discussion by the Board of War, Congress on the sixteenth of September of the same year, in the moment of the escape of the army from imminent perils, resolved that eighty-eight battalions be enlisted to serve during the war; that a money bounty be offered, and a grant of land to those serving until its close. The appointment of all, except general officers, was to be left to the government of the several States, though the

commissions were to proceed from Congress; and to each State was confided the provision of arms, clothing, and every necessary for its quota. Soon after, more efficient articles of war were published. The general power granted to Washington at the end of the year,* to raise and maintain a force of sixteen additional battalions of infantry, three thousand light-horse, and a corps of engineers; and to displace and appoint officers under the rank of brigadier, have been alluded to. The grant of such powers indicates the defects of the arrangement which had been made, and the great necessity of an organized, pervading vigorous system.

The troops raised under the new arrangement were few, the progress of discipline slow. The interferences of Congress were frequent. Their measures without method. Insubordination was the inevitable consequence. So prone was the disposition to question his authority, that Washington found it necessary, through the medium of General Greene, to obtain a declaration of Congress, that it never had been their intention that the commander-in-chief should be bound by the decision of a council of war. Congressional favoritism had also been followed by its baneful consequences.

In despite of all this, the high military qualifications of the American people were conspicuously exhibited. Inferior to their enemy in discipline; in quickness of evolution, rapidity and certainty of fire, the American soldiers were far their superiors, in courage their equals, in patient endurance of privations they could not be surpassed. Discipline and system were the great wants of the army. Much had been gained to its science by the accessions of foreign officers. The bright spirit of the gallant, generous Frenchman had beamed forth in La Fayette, but in the

* Dec. 27, 1776.

gifted De Noailles, the accomplished soldier Du Portail, La Radiere, Custine, Fleury, Du Plessis, the Armands and Ternant, mostly all noblemen of France, were seen qualities rarely excelled—even among a people unsurpassed in the art of war. Poland was also represented in the battle fields of American liberty by Kosciusko and Pulaski.

In respect to the latter, Hamilton addressing Congress, over the signature of Washington, remarked: "As the principal attention in Poland has been, for some time past, paid to the cavalry, it is to be presumed this gentleman is not unacquainted with it. He, we are told, has been, like us, engaged in defending the liberty and independence of his country; and has sacrificed his fortune to his zeal for those objects. He derives from hence a title to our respect, that ought to operate in his favor as far as the good of the service will permit; but it can never be expected we should lose sight of this."

The merits of these individuals were soon appreciated, and those who survived the contest retired from this country distinguished with every mark of respect.

But in the promotion of foreigners the good of the service had often been little regarded. Indiscreet recommendations had been given, and overweening pretensions made and gratified. The resulting embarrassments were many and serious. In addition to the disgust created in the minds of the American officers, finding themselves postponed to men, their inferiors in character and talent, the army was embroiled by a series of petty intrigues, to secure the advancement of individuals.

Gates had early complained of American illiberality,* the French adventurers insisted upon preferment. Soon

* Gates to Lee, Feb. 26, 1776: "Little Eustace is well, but nothing is done for him yet. You know the more than Scotch partiality of these folks." —*C. Lee's Memoirs*, 205.

after Hamilton entered Washington's staff, he disclosed to Duer, in Congress, the embarrassments they caused:

"The bearer of this is Mr. Malmedi, a French gentleman of learning, abilities, and experience. I believe he thinks himself entitled to preferment, and comes to Congress for that purpose.

"At the recommendation of General Lee, he was made brigadier-general by the State of Rhode Island, and filled the station to the satisfaction of his employers, as appears by a letter from Governor Cook, speaking of him in the highest terms of approbation.

"This had led him to hope that he would be adopted by the continent on an equal footing. But in this he will no doubt be mistaken, as there are many insuperable objections to such a measure.

"Among others, it would tend to raise the expectations of the Frenchmen, in general already too high, to a pitch which it would be impossible to gratify or endure. It might not, however, be amiss to do whatever propriety would warrant to keep him in good humor, as he is a man of sense and merit.

"I think policy would justify the advancing him a step higher than his former continental rank.

"Congress, in the beginning, went upon a very injudicious plan with respect to Frenchmen. To every adventurer that came, without even the shadow of credentials, they gave the rank of field officers. This circumstance, seconding the aspiring disposition natural to those people, carried the expectations of those who really had any pretensions to the character of officers, to such a length, that exceeded all the bounds of moderation. As it was impossible to pursue this impolitic plan, the Congress have begun to retrench their excessive liberality; and the consequence has been universal disgust and discontent.

"It would perhaps be injurious, as the French are much addicted to national punctilio, to run into the opposite extreme to that first embraced, and by that mean create a general clamor and dissatisfaction. Policy suggests the propriety of discriminating a few of the most deserving, and endeavoring to keep them in temper, even by gratifying them beyond what they can reasonably pretend to. This will enable us to shake off the despicable part with safety, and to turn a deaf ear to the exorbitant demands of the many. It will be easily believed in France that their want of merit occasioned their want of success, from the extraordinary marks of favor that have been conferred on others; whereas, the united voice of complaint from the whole, might make ill impressions in their own country, which it is not our interest should exist.

"We are already greatly embarrassed with the Frenchmen among us, and from the genius of the people, shall continue to be so. It were to be wished that our agents in France, instead of courting them to come out, were instructed to give no encouragement, but where they could not help it; that is, where applications were made to them by persons countenanced and supported by great men whom it would be impolitic to disoblige. Be assured, sir, we shall never be able to satisfy them, and they can be of no use to us, at least for some time. Their ignorance of our language, of the disposition of the people, the resources and deficiencies of the country, their own habits and tempers,—all these are disqualifications that put it out of their power to be of real use or service to us. You will consider what I have said as entirely my own sentiments, and believe me to be with regard."

Though it was the policy of the cabal to foster these men, who, finding Washington unwilling to promote their

views at the sacrifice of the public interests, became its active instruments, yet when its power declined, Congress passed a resolution to check the evil.

Amid the various objects of moment which occupied his mind, Washington's temper could ill brook the importunities with which he was continually beset; and he was occasionally drawn into expressions of opinion which were readily seized upon, and made the subject of unpleasant comments. His objection was not to meritorious, useful men, but "to adventurers," as Hamilton expressed it. "These men," Washington wrote to Richard Henry Lee, "have no attachment nor ties to the country, further than interest binds them; they have no influence, and are ignorant of the language they are to receive and give orders in; consequently great trouble or much confusion must follow." "Our officers think it exceedingly hard, after they have toiled in this service, and probably have sustained many losses, to have strangers put over them, whose merit is not equal to their own, but whose effrontery will take no denial." "I am haunted and teased to death by the importunity of some, and dissatisfaction of others." The exception is his vindication. "My ideas,* in this representation, do not extend to artillery officers and engineers. The first of these will be useful if they do not break in upon the arrangement of that corps already established by order of Congress; the second are absolutely necessary, and not to be had here." †

Another source of difficulty, and one productive of the most serious inconveniences, especially when viewed in connection with the preceding topic, was the imperfect condition of the regiments.

* Washington's Writings, iv., 424.

† They came, "loaded with debts, and ruined at home in reputation."—*Abbé Robin's Narrative.*

The field officers in commission were so numerous, that adequate commands were in vain sought to be provided for them. It became necessary to combine selections from different corps; whence arose another difficulty,—the appointment of officers from one State, to the command of the troops of another.

To remedy these defects—to devise a plan for the reduction of the regiments—to regulate rank, and to introduce system into the civil departments of the army, were the first objects which the commander-in-chief desired to accomplish, and which he pressed upon the attention of Congress with unremitting solicitude.

To aid these designs, within a short time after the army had taken up their winter-quarters, the committee appointed for that purpose repaired to camp.

On the twenty-eighth of January, a paper was submitted to them, giving a general outline of the defects in, and proposing amendments to, the existing arrangements. This production was digested with great labor, and bears marks of the most studied precision of language, and of a most careful arrangement of its parts. Its details had, doubtless, been well considered by Washington and others. But from two successive drafts in his handwriting, upon which are seen minute notes of reference to the heads of the different departments of the army, the paper, as completed, is manifestly the work of Hamilton.

The primary measure suggested in this plan was "a half-pay and pensionary establishment," a measure indicated by principles of justice, "by the frequent resignations daily happening, and the more frequent importunities for permission to resign, and from some officers of the greatest merit." The next consideration was, "the completing the regiments and altering their establishment." The failure to enlist by bounties indicated the necessity

of a resort to some other method. The mode proposed, though "a disagreeable alternative," yet deemed "unavoidable," was "by drafts from the militia." As drafting for the war, or for a term of years, would probably be disgusting and dangerous, an annual draft of men was recommended. On or before a specified day, these drafted men were to be invited to re-enlist, and as an inducement, a bounty was offered.

"A new establishment of the regiments" was next proposed, omitting the rank of full colonels, for the reason that the enemy had none; and inconveniences in the exchange of prisoners would thus be avoided. The number of company officers was also to be reduced. An augmentation of the cavalry was recommended, and its establishment stated. The next topic was, "the arrangement of the army." The troops from North Carolina were to be consolidated, and were either to join the main army, or to aid South Carolina or Virginia. The inducement to recommend this measure was stated to be "the possibility of the enemy's attempting a more southern expedition the next campaign." "This they may do," it was observed, "in order to gain possession of the capital of another State, which will give reputation to their arms in Europe, distress our trade, and abridge our supplies; at the same time will enable ADMINISTRATION, in another instance, to avail themselves of the illusory idea they endeavor to hold up to the nation—to keep its hopes alive, and extract fresh contributions—that every State, whose capital is possessed, is conquered."

An exposition follows of the probable contributions in men by the respective States. The result anticipated was,—that the establishment would consist of eighty battalions, amounting, if complete, rank and file, to forty thousand three hundred and twenty. Plans for the artil-

lery and for the engineers were also proposed. The pay department of the army was stated to be well conducted, and pertinent comments were made on the importance of punctuality in payments of the troops as affecting them, the public credit, and the state of the currency. Provision for prisoners of war liberated on parole is suggested; and modifications of the articles of war advised, especially to ensure a gradation of punishments. This important communication closed with an admonition, that, "unless effectual remedies be applied without loss of time, the most alarming and ruinous consequences are to be apprehended."

While these several suggestions were under consideration, the immediate supplies necessary to the army were of most urgent moment. To one individual, Hamilton writes, in behalf of Washington: "A prospect now opens of absolute want, such as will make it impossible to keep the army much longer from dissolution, unless the most rigorous and effectual measures be pursued to prevent it." "If every possible exertion is not made use of to send us immediate and ample supplies of cattle, with pain I speak the alarming truth, no human efforts can keep the army from disbanding." A week after, he wrote to Governor Clinton: "For some days past there has been little less than a famine in the camp. A part of the army has been a week without any kind of flesh, and the rest three or four days. Naked and starving as they are, we cannot enough admire the incomparable patience and fidelity of the soldiery, that they have not been, ere this, excited by their sufferings to a general mutiny and dispersion. Strong symptoms, however, of discontent have appeared in particular instances, and nothing but active effort every where can long avert so shocking a catastrophe. Our present sufferings are not all. There is no foundation laid

for any adequate relief hereafter. What a terrible crisis must ensue, unless all the energy of the continent is exerted to provide a timely remedy!" In terms similar to these, other States were called upon, "but nothing less than a change in the system," it was observed, "can effect a radical cure of the evils we labor under at present." While such invocations were made to rescue the army from dissolution, officers were sent out to obtain supplies, and to collect clothing—Tilghman in one direction, Lee in another. In the mean time a new plan of the quartermaster-general's department was framed. Instead of the four branches into which it had been subdivided, without due subordination, one quartermaster-general and two assistants were recommended. This important place, it has been stated, was accepted by General Greene. Schuyler was proposed by the committee in camp as commissary-general of purchases, and his appointment was ardently desired by Washington, but the party of Gates was against him. At the instance of this committee, Jeremiah Wadsworth, a man of great vigor, talent, and independence of character, was appointed; and though, at an immense expense, the soldiers were, in a measure, relieved from the sufferings so long and vainly deplored.

An important result was also attained by the adoption of a new plan of inspectorship, an office, the creation of which had been submitted by Washington some time before to the deliberations of a council of war.

This place had recently been conferred upon the Baron Steuben, a soldier of distinguished merit, who had learned the art of war under the eye of the great Frederick of Prussia, and had been induced by the Count St. Germains to visit the United States as a person most competent to organize an army. The value of his services was soon seen in the improved discipline of the

army, in the control of the detached commands, and in the regulation of the jarring duties of the officers. In its outset this appointment was not free from difficulty. The undefined duties of the office gave rise to great dissatisfaction among the officers, and frequent embarrassment to the commander-in-chief, indicating the necessity of retrenching the authority which, in their jealousy of Washington, and from a desire to lavish on their favorite extraordinary powers, the hostile party had conferred upon Conway.

To effect this object in a manner which would avoid compromitting the general, Hamilton addressed the following letter to his friend Duer:

"I take the liberty to trouble you with a few hints on a matter of some importance. Baron Steuben, who will be the bearer of this, waits on Congress to have his office arranged upon some decisive and permanent footing. It will not be amiss to be on your guard. The baron is a gentleman for whom I have a particular esteem, and whose zeal, intelligence, and success, the consequence of both, entitle him to the greatest credit. But I am apprehensive, with all his good qualities, a fondness for power and importance, natural to every man, may lead him to wish for more extensive prerogatives in his department, than it will be for the good of the service to grant. I should be sorry to excite any prejudice against him on this account; perhaps I may be mistaken in my conjecture. The caution I give will do no harm, if I am; if I am not, it may be useful. In either case, the baron deserves to be considered as a valuable man, and treated with all the deference which good policy will warrant.

"On the first institution of this office, the general allowed him to exercise more ample powers than would be proper for a continuance. They were necessary in

the commencement, to put things in a train, with a degree of despatch which the exigency of our affairs required; but it has been necessary to restrain them, even earlier than was intended. The novelty of the office excited questions about its boundaries; the extent of its operations alarmed the officers of every rank for their own rights. Their jealousies and discontents were rising fast to a height that threatened to overturn the whole plan. It became necessary to apply a remedy. The general has delineated the functions of the inspectorship in general orders, a copy of which will be sent to Congress. The plan is good, and satisfactory to the army in general.

"It may be improved, but it will be unsafe to deviate essentially from it. It is, of course, the general's intention that whatever regulations are adopted by him should undergo the revision, and receive the sanction of Congress; but it is indispensable, in the present state of our army, that he should have the power, from time to time, to introduce and authorize the reformations necessary in our system. It is a work which must be done by occasional and gradual steps, and ought to be entrusted to a person on the spot, who is thoroughly acquainted with all our defects, and has judgment sufficient to adopt the progressive remedies they require. The plan established by Congress, on a report of the Board of War, when Conway was appointed, appears to me exceptionable in many respects. It makes the inspector independent of the commander-in-chief; confers powers which would produce universal opposition in the army, and, by making the previous concurrence of the Board of War requisite to the introduction of every regulation which should be found necessary, opens such a continual source of delay as would defeat the usefulness of the institution. Let the commander-in-chief introduce, and the legislature after-

wards ratify or reject, as they shall think proper. Perhaps you will not differ much from me, when I suppose, that so far as relates to the Board of War, the former scheme was a *brat of faction*, and therefore ought to be renounced.

"There is one thing which the baron has much at heart, which, in good policy, he can by no means be indulged in:—it is the power of enforcing that part of discipline, which we understand by subordination, or an obedience to orders. This power can only be properly lodged with the commander-in-chief, and would inflame the whole army if put into other hands. Each captain is vested with it in his company,—each colonel in his regiment,—each general in his particular command,—and the commander-in-chief in the whole.

"When I began this letter I did not intend to meddle with any other subject than the inspectorship; but one just comes into my head, which appears to me of no small importance. The goodness or force of an army depends as much, perhaps more, on the composition of the corps which form it, as on its collective number. The composition is good or bad, not only according to the quality of the men, but in proportion to the completeness or incompleteness of a corps in respect to numbers. A regiment, for instance, with a full complement of officers, and fifty or sixty men, is not half so good as a company with the same number of men. A colonel will look upon such a command as unworthy his ambition, and will neglect and despise it;—a captain would pride himself in it, and take all the pains in his power to bring it to perfection. In one case, we shall see a total relaxation of discipline, and negligence of every thing that constitutes military excellence; on the other, there will be attention, energy, and every thing that can be wished. Opinion, whether well

or ill founded, is the governing principle of human affairs. A corps much below its establishment, comparing what it is, with what it ought to be, loses all confidence in itself, and the whole army loses that confidence and emulation which are essential to success. These, and a thousand other things that will occur to you, make it evident, that the most important advantages attend the having complete corps, and proportional disadvantages, the reverse. Ten thousand men, distributed into twenty imperfect regiments, will not have the efficiency of the same number, in half the number of regiments. The fact is, with respect to the American army, that the want of discipline, and other defects we labor under, are as much owing to the skeleton state of our regiments, as to any other cause.—What then?

"Have we any prospect of filling our regiments? My opinion is, that we have nearly arrived to our ne plus ultra. If so, we ought to reduce the number of corps, and give them that substance and consistency which they want, by incorporating them together, so as to bring them near their establishment. By this measure, the army would be infinitely improved, and the state would be saved the expense of maintaining a number of superfluous officers.

"In the present condition of our regiments, they are incapable even of performing their common exercises without joining two or more together,—an expedient reluctantly submitted to by those officers who see themselves made second in command of a battalion, instead of first, as their commission imports, which happens to every younger colonel whose regiment is united with that of an elder.

"What would be the inconveniences, while the officers who remain in command, and who might be selected

from the others on account of superior merit, would applaud themselves in the preference given them, and rejoice at a change which confers such additional consequence on themselves?

"Those who should be excluded by the measure, would return home discontented, and make a noise, which would soon subside and be forgotten among matters of greater moment. To quiet them still more effectually, if it should be thought necessary, they might be put upon half-pay for a certain time.

"If on considering this matter, you should agree with me in sentiment, it were to be wished the scheme could be immediately adopted, while the arrangement now in hand is still unexecuted. If it is made, it will be rather inconvenient immediately after to unhinge and throw the whole system again afloat.

"When you determined on your last arrangement, you did not know what success the different States might have had in drafting and recruiting. It would then have been improper to reduce the number of corps, as proposed. We have now seen their success; we have no prospect of seeing the regiments filled;—we should reduce them.

"Believe me to be, with great esteem and regard," &c.

The measures here suggested were frequently brought under the consideration of Congress, and various steps were taken to remedy the evil; but the reduction of the army required great deliberation, in a war where too often the caprices of individuals were unavoidably more consulted, than the public interest.

The proposed limitation of the office of inspector-general was made, and among his papers a draft of a plan for that department of the army, exists in Hamilton's handwriting. It was proposed to Congress by

General Washington, in lieu of the system which had been framed in seventy-seven, and was adopted in part on the fifth of May, seventy-eight.

This plan proposed the establishment of one inspector-general, six deputy inspectors-general, and one inspector to each brigade; defined the duties of the office, rendering it subordinate to Congress, to the board of war, and to the commander-in-chief, at the head of which it was proposed to place Baron Steuben, and also to introduce into it General Cadwallader and Colonel Fleming. Of the former of whom, it is remarked in a letter from Washington, "that he is a military genius, of a decisive and independent spirit, properly impressed with the necessity of order and discipline, and of sufficient vigor to enforce it. He would soon perfect himself in the practical part, and be fit to succeed to the first place in the department." Of Colonel Fleming, who has been previously mentioned as the early instructor of Hamilton, it is observed, "he is an excellent disciplinarian, and from long practice in the British army has acquired the necessary knowledge." The military arrangements were soon after improved by the better organization of the armory department, which was brought before the committee in a letter from Hamilton, written for Washington.

Another subject was at this time taken into serious consideration,—the policy to be adopted towards the numerous Indians who threatened the frontier of the republic.

The reluctance of the United States to employ them as auxiliaries, is among the most gratifying facts in the early history of the Revolution. But this disposition was at last changed by the different policy of the enemy; and in a report framed by Gouverneur Morris, stating "that unless they were employed with them, they would be em-

ployed against them," suggesting "that there is great reason to believe that the novelty of their appearance in the field, the circumstances of horror and affright which attend their attack, will have a great effect upon the minds of men wholly unacquainted with such an enemy," it is proposed, that the Southern Indians should be embodied under General Gist, and the Oneidas employed as light troops—among whom Louis, a chief of considerable talent, was soon after commissioned as colonel, and served with singular fidelity throughout the war.

The pacific conduct of a large portion of the Mohawks, had been chiefly attributable to General Schuyler. In the reign of Queen Anne, his ancestor had been employed as superintendent over this savage people, and he became so popular, that his portrait was preserved among them with the greatest care, and brought out at every important council they held. This influence descended in the family; and during the fiercest moments of the contest, instances and messages of mutual kindness occurred. The wild, imaginative sensibility of this race clothed the person of Schuyler with an almost supernatural sacredness; and it is stated, that on the very day on which Miss McCrea was murdered, his wife and second daughter passed these hordes unmolested. Even until the close of Schuyler's life, parties are remembered to have been seen encamping near his residence at Albany, preferring confident claims upon his bounty, indulging in mimic representations of their savage sports, and reminding him that he was descended from their "Great father Queedir."

A letter to Schuyler from Washington, written by Hamilton, regretted that "the disposition of the Indians was not generally so favorable as could be wished; but it is not to be wondered at, when we consider the advantages the enemy possess over us, in the means of supply-

ing their wants and rewarding their friendships. The Oneidas and Tuscaroras have a particular claim to attention and kindness for their perseverance and fidelity. M. Toussard, with a party of Indians, arrived in camp yesterday." Another party being expected, he dissuaded their coming for the reason, that probably "there will be very little of that kind of service in which the Indians are capable of being useful." Hints were given as to the mode to be adopted to satisfy them in not being employed.

While these several measures were under consideration, the difficult subject of a negotiation for the exchange of prisoners had been resumed.

Late in July, seventy-six, a proposition made by Washington for an exchange upon equal terms was acceded to by Sir William Howe. The frequent differences which had arisen as to the construction and execution of this agreement, had, as stated, been a subject of correspondence. Mutual crimination and recrimination had passed, each side doubtless having just cause of complaint. This subject was again brought before Washington, soon after the late campaign, in a very earnest letter from the British commander. In reply, Hamilton wrote him, over the signature of Washington, commenting upon the treatment of officers in his hands. "Americans," it was observed, "have their feelings of sympathy as well as other men. A series of injuries may exhaust their patience, and it is natural that the sufferings of their friends in captivity should at length irritate them into resentment and acts of retaliation."

The day after the date of this letter, this matter was brought before Congress in a report of the Board of War, and in terms of severe censure, resolutions were passed of a retaliatory character. In the communication of

them to Howe, Hamilton, over the signature of Washington, introduced this observation:

"There is one passage of your letter which I cannot forbear taking particular notice of. No expression of personal politeness to me can be acceptable, accompanied by reflections on the representatives of a free people, under whose authority I have the honor to act. The delicacy I have observed, in refraining from every thing offensive in this way, entitled me to expect a similar treatment from you. I have not indulged myself in invective against the present rulers of Great Britain in the course of our correspondence, nor will I now avail myself of so fruitful a theme."

A few days after, Howe announced his readiness to make a general exchange of prisoners, which was acceded to, and orders were given to remove the English to places most convenient for their delivery. Though approving a general exchange, Congress, referring to a previous resolution, now called for a statement of the accounts of the several States against British prisoners; and declared, that until the balance due to the United States was discharged, no exchange should be made.

When apprised of this decision, Hamilton, over the signature of Washington, addressed a very pointed remonstrance to that body, which has been pronounced "a model of discussion." *

Having stated that, "The unhappy violation of the flag of truce has laid us under no small embarrassment, and has afforded the enemy good grounds for complaints and triumphs at the same time,"—he referred to the frequent sanctions given to his views by Congress. This was followed by an earnest expostulation.

* "Dans une longue lettre, qui est un modèle de discussion des affaires."—*Dewitt's Washington*, i. 130.

"But perhaps it may be thought contrary to our interest to go into an exchange, as the enemy would derive more immediate advantage from it than we should. This I shall not deny, but it appeared to me, that on principles of genuine extensive policy, independent of the considerations of compassion and justice, we were under an obligation not to elude it. I have the best evidence that an event of this kind is the general wish of the country. I know it to be the wish of the army; and no one can doubt, that it is the ardent wish of the unhappy sufferers themselves. We need only consult the tide of humanity and sympathies natural to those connected by cements of blood, interest, and a common dread of evil, to be convinced that the prevailing current of sentiment demands an exchange. If the country, the army, and even the prisoners themselves had a precise idea of our circumstances, and could be fully sensible of the disadvantages that might attend the giving our enemy considerable reinforcements without having an equivalent, they might, perhaps, be willing to make a sacrifice of their feelings to the motives of policy. But they have not this knowledge, and cannot be intrusted with it, and their reasonings, of necessity, will be governed by what they feel.

"Were an opinion once to be established, and the enemy and their emissaries know very well how to inculcate it, if they are furnished with a plausible pretext, that we designedly avoided an exchange, it would be a cause of dissatisfaction and disgust to the country and to the army, of resentment and desperation to our captive officers and soldiers; to say nothing of the importance of not hazarding our national character but upon the most solid grounds, especially in our embryo state, from the influence it may have on our affairs abroad; it may not be a little dangerous to beget, in the minds of our own

countrymen, a suspicion that we do not pay the strictest observance to the maxims of honor and good faith. It is prudent to use the greatest caution, not to shock the notions of general justice and humanity universal among mankind, as well in a public as a private view. In a business, on the side of which the passions are so much concerned as in the present, men would be readily disposed to believe the worst, and cherish the most unfavorable conclusions. Were the letters that have passed between General Howe and myself from first to last, and the proceedings of Congress on the same subject, to be published with proper comments, it is much to be feared, if the exchange should be deferred till the terms of the last resolve were fulfilled, that it would be difficult to prevent our being generally accused of a breach of good faith. Perhaps it might be said, that while the enemy refused us justice, we fondly embraced the opportunity to be loud, persevering, incessant in our claims; but the moment they were willing to render it, we receded from ourselves and started new difficulties. This, I say, might be the reasoning of speculative minds, and they might consider all our professions as *mere* professions, or, at best, that interest and policy were to be the only arbiters of their validity.

"Imputations of this nature would have a tendency to unnerve our operations, by diminishing that respect and confidence which are essential to be placed in those who are at the head of affairs, either in the civil or military line. This, added to the prospect of hopeless captivity, would be a great discouragement to the service. The ill consequences of both would be immense—by increasing the causes of discontent in the army, which are already too numerous, many of which are in a great measure unavoidable—by fortifying that unwillingness which already appears too great, towards entering into the service; and

of course impeding the progress both of drafting and recruiting by dejecting the courage of the soldiery, from an apprehension of the horrors of captivity; and finally by reducing those, whose lot it is to drink the bitter cup, to a despair which can only find relief by renouncing their attachments and engaging with their captors. These effects have already been experienced in part from the obstacles that have lain in the way of exchanges; but if these obstacles were once to seem the result of system, they would become tenfold."

These views were briefly stated in a private letter from Hamilton to Governor Clinton.* "Lately," he remarks, "a flag with provisions and clothing for the British prisoners, with General Washington's passport, was seized at Lancaster. The affair was attended with circumstances of violence. Still more lately, General Washington's engagement with General Howe for an exchange of prisoners has been violated. Congress have resolved, that no exchange shall take place till all accounts are settled, and the balance due the United States paid. The beauty of it is, that on a fair settlement, we shall, without doubt, be in Mr. Howe's debt; and, in the mean time, we detain his officers and soldiers as a security for the payment. The operation of this resolve, though it does not plainly appear upon the face of it, is to put off an exchange, perhaps for ever. At any rate, it cannot take place all next summer. It is thought to be bad policy to go into an exchange; but, admitting this to be true, it is much worse policy to commit such frequent breaches of faith, and ruin our national character. Whatever refined politicians may think, it is of great consequence to preserve a national character; and if it should once be seen to be a system in any State to violate its faith, whenever it is the least in-

* March 12.

convenient to keep it, it will unquestionably have an ill effect upon foreign negotiations, and tend to bring government at home into contempt, and of course to destroy its influence. The general notions of justice and humanity are implanted in almost every human breast, and ought not to be too freely shocked. In the present case, the passions of the country and the army are on the side of an exchange; and a studied attempt to avoid it will disgust both, and tend to make the service odious. It will injure drafting and recruiting, discourage the militia, and increase the discontents of the army. The prospect of hopeless captivity cannot but be very disagreeable to men constantly exposed to the chance of it. Those, whose lot it is to fall into it, will have little scruple to get rid of it by joining the enemy." Having recapitulated the arguments previously used to show the propriety of an exchange, he observes: "And I would ask, whether in a republican State and a republican army, such a cruel policy as that of exposing those men, who are foremost in defence of their country, to the miseries of hopeless captivity, can succeed?"

The expostulation with Congress produced the desired effect. With only three negatives, they authorized the contemplated exchange to proceed, without waiting for a previous settlement of accounts; but directed that it should be a prerequisite to any future cartel.

An arrangement was now made with Howe for a negotiation, and a commission from Washington, drawn up by Hamilton, was issued, appointing him together with others to meet the representatives of Howe. Assurances were in the mean time given to Congress in a letter written by Hamilton of every effort to "exempt citizens from captivity." The commissioners met, but without effecting a cartel. Howe had issued his commission, founded ex-

pressly upon his own authority, declaring that he "had no intention, either of binding the nation, or extending the cartel beyond the limits and duration of his own command." This of course was objected to by the American commissioners. Congress formally approved their conduct, and ordered the correspondence to be published.*

The delays of Congress to act upon the plan for the reorganization of the army now called forth a letter from the pen of Hamilton, signed by the commander-in-chief at Valley Forge.† Referring to a previous letter it is stated: "To know whether the old establishment of the army, or the new as agreed upon by the committee, is the choice of Congress, and in what manner the regiments of this State and the additionals are to be reduced, was my object. These are objects of the greatest moment, as they may, in their consequences, involve the fate of America; for I will undertake to say, that it is next to impossible, when the season is so far advanced, properly to accomplish those changes, appointments, and the dependent arrangements for the ensuing campaign. Should any convulsion happen, or movement take place, they will be altogether impracticable. Justice to my own character, as well as duty to the public, constrains me to repeat these things; their consequences are more easily conceived than described." Then alluding to the proposition for half-pay, it is observed: "If my opinion is asked with respect to the necessity of making this provision for the officers, I am ready to declare, that I do most religiously believe the salvation of the cause depends upon it, and, without it, your officers will moulder to nothing, or be composed of low and illiterate men, void of capacity for this, or any other business. Personally, as an officer, I have no interest in their decision, because I have declared,

* American Remembrancer. † April 10.

and I now repeat it, that I never will receive the smallest benefit from the half-pay establishment; but, as a man who fights under the weight of a proscription, and, as a citizen who wishes to see the liberty of his country established upon a permanent foundation, and whose property depends upon the success of our arms, I am deeply interested. At no period since the commencement of the war, have I felt more painful sensations on account of delay, than at the present; and, urged by them, I have expressed myself without reserve."

Thus stimulated, Congress resumed the consideration of this matter. Different modifications were suggested. On a proposal to give half-pay for a term of years the vote was divided; and it was resolved to grant it for life, New England, New Jersey, and South Carolina in the negative. This decision was subsequently reversed, and the provision was limited to a term of seven years. The chief objection taken was, that the grant was "repugnant to the principles upon which the great controversy was begun, and by which it must and ought to be defended.*

Another important topic was alluded to in a letter written by Hamilton. The vain attempts to regulate prices by legislation, had recently been the chief object of a conference of commissioners from several contiguous States, held at New Haven. It was supposed, that these regulations had failed because of a want of concert; and an act to be passed by the several States was framed to accomplish this despotic purpose. Rejecting so empiric a policy, Hamilton had the previous year suggested to Congress, in the name of the commander-in-chief, the only practicable expedient of domestic relief. It was "the establishment of public tanneries in three or four of the States under care of a judicious commissary or director,"

* Sherman, Huntington, and Wolcott, to Gov. Trumbull, May 1, 1778.

at which "artists, such as shoe and harness makers, might be employed to work the leather up." The other measure was, as the foreign supply of spirits was cut off, the appointment of proper persons to purchase grain and distil it for the army, the want of it being "a source of much complaint."

These measures were not resorted to, and, seeing the effects of the laws regulating prices on the supplies to the army, he now wrote Congress, urging their suspension. "How far it may be practicable to suspend their operation for a time, I cannot determine, but if it can be done, it appears to me, we should experience many advantages from it." The better sense of Massachusetts rejected this impolitic act, and levied a tax to redeem her bills. Congress had previously recommended the raising of a tax of five millions of dollars by the States in specified sums, and that they refrain from the further emission of bills of credit. They had also urged that justice should have a free course, and that subscriptions for loans be opened. With these resolutions two others were passed, less wise—one to confiscate and sell the property of adherents of the enemy, the other to regulate prices. The latter, it was now urged, should be suspended or repealed.

While, with laggard pace, this small assembly were acting upon the suggestions from head-quarters, advices were received from Europe of greatest moment.

The capture of Burgoyne and the bold assault at Germantown had dismayed the councils of England and decided those of France.

On the sixth of February, treaties of alliance, amity and commerce with the United States, were concluded at Paris, of which the details will be given, and ere a fortnight elapsed, before these articles of treaty were made public, bills were introduced into Parliament for the ad-

justment of the controversy. These bills relinquished the right of taxation, except that of imposing custom duties, of which the net product was to be paid and applied to the uses of the colonies in which they were levied. They authorized the appointment of commissioners by the crown to treat with the colonies united in Congress, or with the separate colonial asemblies, or with individuals. Powers were given to these commissioners of suspending hostilities, and also all acts of Parliament relating to the colonies passed since February, sixty-three; of granting pardons and of appointing a governor in any colony where that power had been exercised by the crown.

Hoping to anticipate the action of Congress as to the recent treaties with France, and to prevent their ratification, copies of these bills were sent to America, and were instantly distributed.

Weak as was the measure, no channel could have been selected more offensive than the person employed to communicate them. Tryon, a name odious to the people, sent copies of them to Trumbull, and to Washington, with a request they would give them circulation. These being communicated by him to Congress, resolves, from the pen of Gouverneur Morris, were forthwith unanimously passed, denouncing the proposals, and declaring that no conference could be held, or treaty made with Great Britain, unless, as a preliminary, her fleets and armies were withdrawn, or the independence of the United States was expressly acknowledged.

The States were at the same time called upon to bring their respective quotas of continental troops into the field, and to have all their militia in readiness to act.

The next day pardons were recommended to be proclaimed by the States to all persons who should return to their allegiance before the tenth of June, to be received "with compassion and mercy."

The communication of Tryon to the commander-in-chief had fired his temper. He truly pronounced his application to him to circulate these bills among the army an "extraordinary and impertinent request." Hamilton gave it a different turn, and three days after, over the signature of Washington, acknowledged it in a vein of brief, merited irony:

"Sir,—Your letter of the 17th and a triplicate of the same were duly received. I had the pleasure of seeing the drafts of the two bills, before those which were sent by you came to hand; and I can assure you they were suffered to have a free currency among the officers and men under my command, in whose fidelity to the United States I have the most perfect confidence. The enclosed gazette, published the 24th at Yorktown, will show you that it is the wish of Congress that they should have an unrestrained circulation. I take the liberty to transmit to you a few printed copies of a resolution of Congress of the 23d instant, and to request that you will be instrumental in communicating its contents, so far as it may be in your power, to the persons who are the objects of its operation. The benevolent purpose it is intended to answer will, I persuade myself, sufficiently recommend it to your candor."

The circulation of these bills wholly failed of their intended purpose. They gave a new impulse to the desire of independence.

A few days after, the treaties with France were laid before Congress. On the fifth of May, they were unanimously ratified, and the following day, the alliance was celebrated by the army with a military parade, a solemn thanksgiving, a public banquet of the officers, and cheering gratulations of the soldiery.

An address was now issued by Congress inciting the

people to "strenuous unremitted exertions," which was followed by a proclamation enjoining a sacred regard to the rights of neutral powers, and impunity to all vessels under the protection of neutral colors, nations, or princes, under penalty of condign punishment.

The conclusion of these treaties had raised in the mind of General Greene questions as to the extent of the preparations to be made for the military service. On being communicated to Washington, a provident reply was written to him by Hamilton in behalf of the commander-in-chief, on the day of their ratification:

"In answer to your favor of the third, I give it clearly as my opinion, that no change has happened in our affairs which will justify the least relaxation in any of our military preparations, and consequently that the provisions you have been, and are making in your department, ought to be continued in their fullest vigor and extent.

"The intelligence from abroad is extremely favorable, and affords us an earnest of success, with proper management, but there is nothing in it that can make it prudent to depart in the smallest degree from the exertion we should otherwise have made. There may still be business enough to call out our most strenuous efforts. Britain is a country full of resources. Her interest and connections in Europe are great; an union within, under a popular administration, which a principle of common danger may produce, would render her capable of great internal exertions.

"The storm which now seems to be rising in Europe may subside, and a compromise ensue between the contending powers, from which a change in the system may result, very advantageous to the views of our enemies. All these are events which may happen; and which, if there were no other considerations, would make it unwise

to suffer ourselves to be lulled into security, or to remit any endeavors that may serve to put our military affairs upon the most respectable footing possible.

"But it is also to be remembered, that the British army in America is still very considerable; and if collected, would be formidable to all the force we should be able to oppose to it. In all probability, it will either be withdrawn or assembled at one point, for some vigorous and enterprising push, if it were only to make the way for a negotiation. The former is more to be wished than expected. British pride would never submit to it, but in the last extremity; and perhaps we should flatter ourselves too much, to suppose that extremity exists. If the latter should be the case, remissness in our present preparations might be fatal; or at any rate, could not fail to have a very injurious influence. The enemy might obtain successes which would have a most unhappy operation upon the current of our sentiments at home, and upon the progress of our negotiations and growing friendships abroad.

"If we had nothing to fear from any offensive operations of the enemy, policy may require very extensive and important offensive operations on our part, which will make it necessary we should be prepared in the amplest manner at all points.

"In a word, in what manner soever the remainder of the contest is to be prosecuted, whether it is to depend upon fighting or negotiation, a powerful army, well furnished with every apparatus of war, will put it in our power to meet all contingencies, with confidence and advantage, and to pursue the true interests of these States through any combination of circumstances that shall present itself, with firmness and decision.

"Whether any, or what, change may happen in the

local situation of the army, in the approaching campaign, or what disposition in your department may be requisite in consequence, are matters which, for particular reasons, I cannot yet determine. A council will soon be held, in which will be decided a general plan of operations for the army. When this is done, you will receive your instructions accordingly: in the mean time, you will proceed in the plan already on foot."

The President of Congress writes at this time: "We are not to roll down a green bank and toy away the ensuing summer. There is blood, much blood in our prospect."

The measures to fill the ranks and to reorganize the army were now completed. To attain the first object, the States had been required by Congress "to fill up by drafts of their militia, or in any other way that shall be effectual," their respective quotas; and "to procure recruits by enlistments for three years or during the war." The reorganization of the army was committed to Washington, in conjunction with two members of Congress, too late to accomplish much. To secure to it supplies, an embargo was laid on the exportation of provisions. Lee having been exchanged for Prescott, and Ethan Allen for Colonel Campbell, an exchange of prisoners was also authorized. With this view, Hamilton was commissioned by Washington to receive the proposals of the enemy, and "to do definitively whatever might be necessary towards the execution of a general exchange."

The mission was in part successful.

CHAPTER XVI.

The council of war alluded to in the recent letter to Greene was held on the eighth of May. The total force of the enemy was estimated, exclusive of artillery and cavalry, to be about sixteen thousand effective men, two thousand in Rhode Island, four in New York, the residue at Philadelphia. This was below the actual strength. The total American force of continentals, exclusive of artillery and cavalry, was fifteen thousand—eighteen hundred of these upon the Hudson, fourteen hundred at Wilmington, the rest, including the sick, at Valley Forge. The reinforcements to come in might be computed at five thousand more. Three plans had been thought of: an attack upon Philadelphia; a transfer of the army and a descent upon New York; or to wait within their lines the movements of the enemy. The latter course was decided upon.

What would be the future operations of the British, was now the interesting problem. An extensive plan had been formed at London, but it was abandoned upon advices of the recent treaties between France and the United States.

Howe having resigned his command, it was conferred upon Sir Henry Clinton, whose capture of the Highland forts had obtained for him the confidence of the ministry.

England began to feel that the subjugation of her colonies was a herculean task. She had already transported thither sixty-two thousand soldiers and twenty-two thousand seamen. Of the former, the returns showed a loss of nearly twenty-nine thousand, of the latter, four thousand, while the captures by American privateers were estimated to constitute a loss of thirteen millions of dollars. What greater sacrifices and greater losses were to result from the co-operation of France in the contest was a fearful question. The recovery of the colonies appeared hopeless.

Positive instructions were now given to Clinton, with an armament of five thousand men, immediately to capture St. Lucie; and, this being effected, to hold it, distrib uting a part of the force among the British West Indies. Another division of three thousand was to proceed to Florida, and to occupy St. Augustine and Pensacola. Philadelphia was to be evacuated, and the troops there to be concentrated at New York to wait the issue of the contemplated negotiation, hopes of its success being weakly indulged. Should it fail, and New York be seriously endangered, the army was to be conveyed to Rhode Island, and a part, if it should be deemed prudent, detached for the protection of Nova Scotia. Thus the alarm of the alliance with France had put England upon the defensive.

Ten days after the council of war,* adverted to in the recent letter to Greene, a large detachment was sent forward under La Fayette to move between the Delaware and the Schuylkill, and watch the enemy. The instructions were prepared by Hamilton, who had written to Morgan, to send forward a body of picked men, that, with a party of Indians, were to join the detachment.

* May 18.

"A variety of concurring accounts," he stated to La Fayette, "make it probable that the enemy are preparing to evacuate Philadelphia. This is a point, which it is of the utmost importance to ascertain; and, if possible, the place of their future destination. Should you be able to gain certain intelligence of the time of their intended embarkation, so that you may be able to take advantage of it, and fall upon the rear of the enemy in the act of withdrawing, it will be a very desirable event. But this will be a matter of no small difficulty, and will require the greatest caution and prudence in the execution. Any deception or precipitation might be attended with the most disastrous consequences. You will remember, that your detachment is a very valuable one, and that any accident happening to it, would be a very severe blow to this army. You will, therefore, use every possible precaution for its security, and to guard against a surprise." La Fayette immediately marched and took a position at Barren Hill near the Schuylkill, equi-distant from Philadelphia and Valley Forge. After the interval of a day, he was surprised by the enemy, and in danger of being surrounded. A skilful manœuvre gained him time to retreat, and, crossing the Schuylkill, he took a secure position near its western bank. While the generous fidelity of La Fayette and the importance of sustaining his influence with the French court were motives to cherish him, the danger to which this detachment had been exposed was a monition.

The destination of the enemy's forces was still uncertain, though the greater probability was New York. To prepare for the contingency of a southern movement, boats were directed to be provided on the Susquehanna, while Governor Livingston was called upon to hold the Jersey militia in immediate readiness, parties of whom General Dickinson was ordered to collect, and to give the

enemy all the interruption in his power. In a letter from the pen of Hamilton to Wharton, he also was urged "so to order matters, that the whole force of the militia of Pennsylvania might on any sudden exigency be immediately drawn forth." Maxwell was ordered to cross the Delaware and co-operate with Dickinson. "Every possible expedient," Hamilton wrote him in behalf of Washington, "should be used to disturb and retard their progress, by hanging on their flanks and rear, breaking down the bridges over the creeks in their route, blocking up the roads by falling trees, and by every other method that can be devised."

The intention of the enemy was to proceed to New York by water, but the want of transports prevented Clinton's embarking his whole force. Apprehensions also, if delayed on his voyage by unfavorable winds, that Washington would in the interval make "a decisive push for that city," determined him to march through Jersey.

While about to march, the British commissioners appointed to submit the conciliatory acts of Parliament to Congress arrived.* Overtures to persons of influence were made, which proved wholly unsuccessful. Among others, Robert Morris was addressed with assurances of reward. "I think," it was added, "Washington and the President have a right to every favor that grateful nations can bestow, if they could once more unite our interests, and spare the miseries and devastations of war."

After a full consideration of the papers before them, Congress, on the seventeenth of June resolved, they "would be ready to enter upon the consideration of a treaty of peace and commerce, not inconsistent with treaties already subsisting, when the king of Great Britain shall demonstrate a sincere disposition for that purpose."

* June 4.

"The only solid proof of this disposition," it was declared, "will be, an explicit acknowledgment of the independence of these States, or the withdrawing his fleets and armies."

The same day a council of war was convened by Washington. He estimated the British force at ten thousand men, his own in a condition for service at one thousand more, exclusive of a brigade in the Jerseys of eight hundred. He then submitted the questions, "Whether any enterprise ought to be undertaken against the enemy in their present circumstances? Whether they should remain where they were till the final evacuation of the city, or move immediately towards the Delaware? Whether the detachment in the Jerseys should be reinforced, that it might take advantage of the enemy's retreat? Whether, if the enemy should march towards Amboy, and they remained where they were until the enemy had left the city, they could arrive in time to give them any material interruption? Whether it would be prudent to attempt it, or more eligible to proceed to the North River; and, if an attack were made, ought it to be a partial or a general one?* It was determined by a majority of the members to avoid a general or partial engagement, in opposition to Greene, Wayne, and La Fayette, who urged the opinion, that their true policy was to harass the enemy on their retreat, and without any unnecessary exposure of the army, to seize the first opportunity of bringing on an engagement.

The opinion of General Lee, who had recently joined the army, was strenuous against an attack. His reputation gave it a preponderating weight. He not only urged the impolicy of active operations, but endeavored to sustain it on grounds extremely mortifying to the pride of

* From minute of council, by Hamilton.

the Americans. Hamilton, in an eulogium upon Greene delivered in the presence of Washington and many officers, thus expressed himself in reference to the determination not to assail the enemy: "I forbear to lift the veil from off those impotent councils, which by a formal vote had decreed an undisturbed passage to an enemy retiring from the fairest fruits of his victories, to seek an asylum from impending danger, disheartened by retreat, dispirited by desertion, broken by fatigue;—retreating through woods, defiles, and morasses, in which his discipline was useless, in the face of an army superior in numbers, elated by pursuit, and ardent to signalize their courage. 'Tis enough for the honor of Greene to say, that he left nothing unessayed to avert and to frustrate so degrading a resolution; and it was happy for America, that the man whose reputation could not be wounded without wounding the cause of his country, had the noble fortitude to rescue himself and the army he commanded from the disgrace with which they were both menaced, by *the characteristic imbecility of a council of war.*"

At three o'clock of the morning after that council was held, the eighteenth of June, the enemy moved. Hamilton immediately wrote over the signature of Washington to General Dickinson: "The rear of the enemy are crossing the Delaware. I am putting the army in motion in consequence. I rely on your activity to give the enemy all possible obstruction in their march, and that you will give me instant and regular intelligence of every thing that passes."

The following day, instructions from the pen of Hamilton were given to Arnold, whose wound prevented his taking the field, to command in Philadelphia. He was enjoined "to take every prudent step in his power, to preserve tranquillity and order in the city, and give security

to individuals of every class and description, restraining as far as possible, till the restoration of civil government, every species of persecution, insult or abuse, either from the soldiery to the inhabitants or among each other."

Washington, having detached Maxwell's brigade with the Jersey militia to impede the progress of the enemy, began his march towards Corryell's Ferry across the Delaware. Having arrived there at noon, he reinforced Maxwell with a select corps under Morgan. At this place Hamilton wrote on the twenty-first in his name to Gates at Peekskill: "Two divisions of the army have crossed the Delaware, the remainder will cross to-morrow. The enemy by the last intelligence were moving on slowly, the head of their column had only reached Mount Holly. Their shipping had gone down the river below Reedy Island, except two which lay opposite to it. These appearances seem to decide, that they intend to traverse the Jerseys, though they do not appear to be in any hurry. While they continue in their present or a similar posture, no detachments can with propriety be made from this army to reinforce you." This he was assured would be done "to counteract any attempt they may meditate that way."

Their first movements rendering it doubtful which course they proposed to take, Washington, embarrassed by the decision of the council, and unwilling to assume the responsibility of precipitating an engagement, took a circuitous route by which he reached Hopewell, a place five miles from Princeton, about noon of the twenty-third of June. Here he halted until the morning of the twenty-fifth. Meanwhile the enemy, delayed by their heavy train, by the obstructions interposed, and by the weather, had only gained the vicinity of Allentown, where they encamped on the twenty-fourth. A letter written by

Hamilton, by order of Washington to Cadwallader, from this point, explains the delay of the American army, which has been a subject of animadversion: "I have just received yours this day from the drawbridge. The army marched this morning to this place. It was my intention to have taken post near Princeton, but finding the enemy are dilatory in advancing, I am doubtful of the propriety of proceeding any farther, till their intention is ascertained. I wish you to inform me more particularly of the obstructions which have been thrown in their way, that I may be the better able to judge whether their delay is owing to necessity or choice. Any circumstance that may serve to throw light upon this question, I shall be obliged to you for, as it is of very great importance. If their delay is voluntary, it argues a design to draw us into a general action, and proves that they consider this to be a desirable event. They may, perhaps, wish to draw us off from the Delaware, far to the left, and then, by a rapid movement, gain our right flank and rear. I should be glad of your sentiments fully as to their probable designs, and the conduct which it will be most proper for us to observe in consequence. You will be pleased to continue to advise me punctually of every movement and appearance of the enemy. Let me remind you of mentioning always the hour at which you write, which is of the greatest moment."

While the army was at this post, and Sir Henry Clinton was balancing between the route to Staten Island, which would expose him to the danger of crossing the Raritan with an army in his rear, and the more direct route by way of Monmouth, which gave him the advantage, if necessary, of entrenching himself on the high grounds of Middletown, Washington called a second council of general officers, in which, supported by Greene,

Wayne and La Fayette, he urged the policy of pursuing the enemy, and bringing on an engagement before they could reach the eminences in their front. "The result," Hamilton remarked, "would have done honor to the most honorable society of midwives, and to them only. The purport was, that we should keep at a comfortable distance from the enemy, and keep up a vain parade of annoying them by detachment."

Still this opinion, by the overruling influence of Lee, prevailed; and Washington was again placed in the dilemma, either of assuming the responsibility of an attack, or of subjecting himself to the imputation of pusillanimously sacrificing an opportunity, which the advantage of the ground, and his superior force seemed to promise, of a decisive victory.

As soon as the council had broken up, Hamilton called upon Greene, and urged him to unite with him in pressing Washington to force an engagement. As they approached the general, sitting in his tent, he arose and said, "Gentlemen, I anticipate the object of your visit. You wish me to fight." Greene and Hamilton then recapitulated the reasons which had been advanced in the council; avowing their opinion, that if the British were suffered to retreat unmolested, they were disgraced. Washington being of the same opinion, an attack was decided.

Unable to induce the council to recede from their decision, he succeeded in obtaining their assent to the detaching of fifteen hundred men under General Scott, to join the corps on the left flank of the enemy. Even the strength of this detachment would have been reduced by Lee; but the lion-hearted Wayne, firmly resisting the idea of inactivity, refused to sign the resolutions of the council, and this point was ultimately carried.

Morgan was now ordered to gain the enemy's right

flank, Maxwell to hang on their left, and Scott was instructed, under an order penned by Hamilton, "to march immediately towards Allentown, in order to fall in with the enemy's left flank and rear, and give them all the annoyance in his power."

Washington moved the next morning to Kingston, and there, as Hamilton states,* "made another detachment of a thousand men under General Wayne, and formed all the detached troops into an advanced corps under the command of the Marquis de La Fayette. The project was, that this advanced corps should take the first opportunity to attack the enemy's rear on the march, to be supported or covered, as circumstances should require, by the whole army. General Lee's conduct with respect to the command of this corps was truly childish. According to the incorrect notions of our army, his seniority would have entitled him to the command of the advanced corps; but he in the first instance declined it in favor of the marquis. Some of his friends having blamed him for doing it, and Lord Stirling having shown a disposition to interpose his claim, General Lee very inconsistently reasserted his pretensions. The matter was a second time accommodated, General Lee and Lord Stirling agreed to let the marquis command. General Lee, a little time after, recanted again and became very importunate. The general," (Washington) "who had all along observed the greatest candor in the matter, grew tired of such fickle behavior, and ordered the marquis to proceed." To avoid a surprise, Hamilton was directed to go on with the advance, and aid in the execution of the design.

He proceeded forthwith to Cranberry, whence he wrote to La Fayette: "We find on our arrival here, that the intelligence received on the road is true. The enemy

* Hamilton to Elias Boudinot, July 5, 1777.

have all filed off from Allentown, on the Monmouth road. General Maxwell is at Hydestown, about three miles from this place. General Dickinson is said to be on the enemy's right flank, but where, cannot be told. We can hear nothing certain of General Scott, but, from circumstances, he is probably at Allentown. We shall, agreeably to your request, consider and appoint some proper place of rendezvous for the union of our force, which we shall communicate to Generals Maxwell and Scott, and to yourself. In the mean time, I would recommend to you, to move towards this place as soon as the convenience of your men will permit. I am told that Colonel Morgan is on the enemy's right flank. We had a slight skirmish with their rear this forenoon, on the Monmouth road leading from Allentown."

La Fayette wrote on the twenty-sixth to Washington: "When I got there" (Cranberry) "I was sorry to hear that Hamilton, who had been riding all the night, had not been able to find any body who could give him certain intelligence. But, by a party who came back, I hear the enemy are in motion, and their rear about one mile off the place they had occupied last night, which is seven or eight miles from here. I immediately put Generals Maxwell and Wayne's brigades in motion, and I will fall lower down with General Scott's, with Jackson's regiment and some militia."

On the same day, Hamilton wrote from a place eight miles from Allentown to Washington, who had moved forward on the evening of the twenty-fifth, and arrived at Cranberry the next morning. "We have halted the troops at this place, eight miles from Allentown. The enemy, by our last reports, were four miles from this, and had passed the road which turns off towards South Amboy, which determines their route towards Shrewsbury.

Our reason for halting is, the extreme distress of the troops for want of provisions. General Wayne's detachment is almost starving, and seem both unwilling and unable to march till they are supplied. If we do not receive an immediate supply, the whole purpose of our detachment must be frustrated.

"On my arrival at Cranberry last evening, I proceeded, by desire of general the marquis, immediately to Hyde's Town and Allentown, to take measures for cooperating with the different parts of the detachments, and to find what was doing to procure intelligence. I found every precaution neglected;—no horse was near the enemy, or could be heard of till late in the morning; so that before we could send out parties, and get the necessary information, they were in full march, and as they have marched pretty expeditiously, we should not be able to come up with them during the day, even if we did not suffer the impediment we do on the score of provisions.

"We are entirely at a loss where the army is, which is no inconsiderable check to our enterprise. If the army is wholly out of supporting distance, we risk the total loss of the detachment in making an attack. If the army will countenance us, we may do something clever. We feel our personal honor, as well as the honor of the army and the good of the service, interested, and are heartily desirous to attempt whatever the disposition of our men will second, and prudence authorize. It is evident, the enemy wish to avoid, not to engage us. An officer is just come in, who informs, he left the enemy's force near five miles off, still in march. To ascertain more fully their route, I have ordered a fresh party on their left, and towards the head of their column. They have three brigades in rear of their baggage."

In the after part of the same day he again wrote to

Washington, who, at the head of the main body, was detained at Cranberry by a storm: "The result of what I have seen and heard respecting the enemy is, that they have encamped with their van a little beyond Monmouth Court-House, and their rear at Manalapans river, about seven miles from this place. Their march to-day has been very judiciously conducted; their baggage in front, and their flying army in the rear, with a rear guard of one thousand men about four hundred paces from the main body.

"To attack them in this situation, without being supported by the whole army, would be folly in the extreme. If it should be thought advisable to give the necessary support, the army can move to some position near the enemy's left flank, which would put them in a very awkward situation, with so respectable a body in their rear, and would put it out of their power to turn either flank, should they be so disposed. Their left is strongly posted; and I am told their right is also. By some accounts, one part of his army lies in the road leading from the Monmouth road to South Amboy. It is not improbable that South Amboy may still be the object. I had written thus far when your letter to the marquis arrived. This puts the matter on a totally different footing. The detachment will march to-morrow morning at three o'clock to Englishtown." This order was given in consequence of the delay of the main body, by which the advanced corps, being too far on the right, would be unsupported, in case of an attack, as had been indicated in Hamilton's letter of the morning. Early on the twenty-seventh, the detachment under the marquis moved forward to Englishtown. The change in the position of the enemy rendering it proper to reinforce the advanced corps, and partly to relieve Lee's feelings, Washington

detached him with two brigades to Englishtown to support La Fayette. In order to assure his purpose, he was instructed, that any operation in which the advance had engaged, should be persevered in; and with this understanding, the command was confided to him. The main body then moved forward, and encamped within three miles of that place.

On the evening of the twenty-seventh, Hamilton, who had rejoined the main body by order of Washington, wrote to General Lee, directing him, from the apprehension that the enemy might move off at night, or early in the morning, to detach a party of six or eight hundred men, to lie near them, and to skirmish so as to produce some delay; also to give orders to Morgan to make an attack for a similar purpose. A previous order had been issued to Lee to call the officers together, and plan the attack; and an hour was appointed by him for the conference; but before they met, he rode out, and on the inquiry for orders, they were informed that he had none to give.

In the interim, the enemy had taken a strong position with their right extending about a mile and a half beyond Monmouth Court-House, to the parting of the roads leading to Shrewsbury and Middletown, and their left along the road from Allentown to Monmouth, about three miles this side of the Court-House. Their right flank lay on the skirt of a small wood, while their left was secured by a very thick one, a morass running towards their rear, and their whole front covered by a wood, and, for a considerable extent towards the left, with a morass. In this situation they halted till the morning of the twenty-eighth.* The information showing, that should the enemy reach the heights of Monmouth, a distance of ten or twelve miles from their present position, it would be impossible to at-

* Washington's Writings, v. 424, 425.

tempt any thing against them with a prospect of success, Lee was ordered to make his disposition for the attack, and to keep his troops constantly lying upon their arms, to be in readiness at the shortest notice. This was done with respect to the troops under Washington's immediate command.

An express announcing, about five in the morning, that the front of the enemy had begun their march, Hamilton, who had rejoined the marquis before break of day, as soon as he saw the probability of the van of the advanced corps being engaged with the enemy, returned to Washington, who was coming up with the main body, and advised* him to throw the right wing of the army round by the right, and to follow with the left wing directly in General Lee's rear to support him, who had been ordered to move on and attack the enemy, unless there should be very powerful reasons to the contrary, informing him that the main body was marching to sustain him. An order was also immediately given to Greene to file off with the right wing, and take a position so as to protect the right of the army, which was done. Hamilton then went forward to reconnoitre. Lee, after having advanced a short distance, ordered a halt; he then again moved forward, and in half an hour after, Wayne was directed by Lee to leave his own detachment, and take command of the front. Scott's brigade then advanced up the morass on one side, Varnum's following. Wayne, on reaching the front, sent intelligence to Lee, that the enemy were moving in great disorder, and urged him to push on the rear. He continued to advance, crossing the morass near the road where they were marching. Their whole force then

* Proceedings of a court-martial for the trial of General Lee, held at Brunswick, July 4th, 1778. Fitzgerald's testimony, p. 23. Tilghman's, p. 26. Laurens' testimony, p. 18. Foreman's, p. 10. Stewart's, p. 15.

in view halted; a body of British horse, covered by infantry, instantly charged the foremost regiment under Colonel Butler, who, pouring in a well-directed fire, broke them, and threw their covering party into disorder. The pursuit was continued, when the enemy opened a fire from their artillery, inclining to the right of the Americans, in order to gain an eminence, where their veterans formed with admirable coolness, as they came up in succession. Wayne, hoping to gain the advantage of the ground, formed Scott's brigade, under a heavy discharge of artillery, and still pressed on, when an order was received from Lee, who, Hamilton states,* "meditated the disgrace of the Americans," TO RETREAT. The enemy seeing the situation of this detachment wholly unsupported, passed a column through the village, and gained a position between it and the remainder of the army, when they again made a spirited charge with their horse, and the whole advance was compelled to retire; which they did, under cover of a wood, until they reached the body under Lee. Hamilton having urged in vain that possession should be taken of a hill which commanded the plain on which the enemy were coming up, and that there the battle should be fought,† rejoined Washington to report what he had done. He thus represented the situation of the advance;‡ that when he came up with Lee, the enemy was drawn up with their right near a wood, their left in open ground covered by cavalry; that the American columns were within cannon shot of the enemy; that he rode up to the front of the column, and perceiving that

* "There let me call to your indignant view—the flower of the American infantry flying before an enemy that scarcely dared to pursue—vanquished without a blow—vanquished by their obedience to the commands of a leader, who meditated their disgrace."—*Hamilton's Works*, iii. 484.

† Lee's Defence, p. 53.

‡ Hamilton's testimony, p. 20.

their cavalry were filing off towards the left, as if to attempt Lee's right, he suggested to him that a column should wheel on their right and attack them, that this suggestion was approved; and Hamilton, by Lee's order, directed La Fayette to wheel by his right, gain, and attack the enemy's flank. At this instant, while Washington was standing with his arm extended over his horse, during a halt for a few moments, where the roads forked, a small party came rapidly up, from whom he learned that the advanced corps was on the retreat. He instantly sprung upon his horse, and having ordered Colonel Harrison, who had returned from reconnoitring, to ascertain the truth, pushed forward to the rear of the advanced corps, and rallied the retreating troops.

To every inquiry as to the cause of the retreat, an unsatisfactory answer was given. Colonel Ogden, who followed, exclaimed with an oath, "we are flying from a shadow." The troops were then in the greatest disorder, ignorant what direction to pursue.

Washington meanwhile reached the knoll where Lee was,—he immediately ordered Wayne to renew the combat, directed cannon to be brought up, which was done by Colonel Oswald, and a brisk cannonade ensued. Then calling up Colonels Ramsay and Stewart, he vehemently exclaimed, that they were the officers on whom he should depend to give the enemy a check. While these regiments were forming, Lee approached. Washington demanded of him, in haste, the cause of the retreat. He replied—"Sir," "Sir," with hesitation, stating that it was owing to contradictory information and disobedience of orders, and that he did not choose to beard the British army in such a situation; and that besides, the attack was contrary to his opinion. Washington replied, that

whatever was his opinion, he expected his orders would have been obeyed.*

At this moment, Hamilton rode up, and exclaimed to Lee, under strong excitement, "I will stay with you, my dear general, and die with you. Let us all die here, rather than retreat." Perceiving the enemy advancing on the artillery, which, by the orders of General Knox had been posted on the right,† he advised that a detachment should march to their succor; when, after a short interval, Colonel Livingston pushed forward and repulsed them with spirit.

Hamilton then rode towards the rear; when finding Colonel Olney ‡ retreating with Varnum's brigade, and fearing that the artillery in their front would be lost, he ordered the brigade to form along a fence near him, with all possible despatch, which they immediately did, and charged at the point of the bayonet, where Hamilton, who had assisted in forming them, and had placed himself at their head, had his horse shot under him. Hurt by the fall,§ and overcome by the heat, (for he had ridden throughout the action without his hat,) he was compelled to retire.

This party, after exchanging a sharp fire, gave time for the artillery to fall back; but, too weak to prevent the enemy from outflanking them, retreated with considerable loss.

These two successive checks by Livingston and Olney, afforded time to make a disposition of the left wing, and

* The inquiry having been, after Washington's decease, made of Hamilton, whether in this interview he was angered to cursing, Hamilton replied: "Washington was modest. He was careful of his words. He had not time to curse. He had to retrieve the day."

† Hamilton's testimony, p. 20.

‡ Colonel Olney's testimony, p. 40.

§ Hamilton's testimony, p. 21.

to form the second line of the army upon an eminence, and in a copse in the rear covered by a morass. On this elevation, Stirling, who commanded that wing, placed cannon, which protected the charges of the infantry, produced a great impression on the enemy, and stopped their progress.

Greene, as soon as he heard of the retreat, pushed forward, and selected a position on the right, which Hamilton had advised Lee to take, crowned it with artillery, and kept off the British advancing on the right, while he severely enfiladed the left. Wayne then advanced, and pouring in a close fire, drove the enemy beyond the morass, near which Butler had at first repulsed them. Washington followed up the attack, by orders to General Poor, with two brigades, to move on the right, and Woodford on their left, while Knox brought his artillery to bear upon their front. These dispositions were made ; but obstacles prevented their reaching the enemy until night had closed in.

The Americans, worn out by the intense heat, reposed on the field of battle, hoping to renew the action the ensuing day ; but the enemy taking advantage of the darkness, having removed their wounded, marched about midnight in such silence, that their retreat was unperceived, and succeeded in embarking for New York at Sandy Hook. Washington, unfortunately, believing that no serious injury could be inflicted upon them, leaving only a small force to hover around them, moved up for the protection of the Hudson.

This narrative shows the conspicuous services of Hamilton in this engagement. A letter from camp, published at the time, thus speaks of the conduct of Washington's staff: "I am happy to have it in my power to mention the merit of Colonel Hamilton. He was inces-

sant in his endeavors during the whole day, in reconnoitring the enemy, and in rallying and charging; but whether he or Colonel Laurens deserves most of our commendation is somewhat doubtful—both had their horses shot under them, and both exhibited singular proofs of bravery. They seemed to court death, under our doubtful circumstances; and triumphed over it, as the face of war changed in our favor. Fitzgerald had a slight contusion with a musket ball; he and Meade claim the highest encomiums.

"Colonel Olney, at the head of Varnum's brigade, made a successful charge with the bayonet; Colonel Barber received a ball through the side. The artillery under Knox and Oswald were much distinguished."

As to Washington, Hamilton remarks in a private letter to Boudinot: "I never saw the General to so much advantage. His coolness and firmness were admirable. He instantly took measures for checking the enemy's advance, and giving time to the army, which was very near, to form and make a proper disposition. He then rode back and had the troops formed on a very advantageous piece of ground; in which, and in other transactions of the day, General Greene and Lord Stirling rendered very essential service, and did themselves great honor. America owes a great deal to General Washington for this day's work. A general rout, dismay and disgrace, would have attended the whole army in any other hands but his. By his own good sense and fortitude, he turned the fate of the day. Other officers have great merit in performing their parts well, but he directed the whole with the skill of a master workman. He did not hug himself at a distance and leave an Arnold to win laurels for him, but by his own presence he brought order out of confusion, animated his troops, and led them to success." After a tribute to

Wayne, Stewart, Ramsey, Olney, Livingston, Barber, Cilley, Parker, Craig and Oswald, he observes: "The behavior of the officers and men was such as could not easily be surpassed. Our troops, after the first impulse from mismanagement, behaved with more spirit and moved with greater order than the British troops. You know my way of thinking of our army, and that I am not apt to flatter it. I assure you, I never was pleased with them before this day. What think you now of General Lee? Whatever a court-martial may decide, I shall continue to believe and say,—his conduct was monstrous and unpardonable."

Earnest dissensions arose in the army in respect to Lee. The great majority condemned him. His immediate friends sought to exculpate his conduct on the grounds of discretionary orders and alleged contradictory intelligence.

Certain it is, that Lee rejoined the army with undiminished disesteem of Washington. A few days before this battle he wrote to Rush: "You are struck with the great events, changes, and new characters which have appeared on the stage since I saw you last; but I am more struck with the admirable efficacy of blunders. It seemed to be a trial of skill which party should outdo the other; and it is hard to say which played the deepest strokes; but it was a capital one of ours, which certainly gave the happy turn which affairs have taken. Upon my soul, it was time for fortune to interpose, or we were inevitably lost."

The day after the action, he wrote an offensive letter to Washington, claiming the merit of the victory; demanding reparation for the injury committed; and a specification of the grounds upon which he had rebuked him. Washington replied, that what he said "was dictated by

duty, and warranted by the occasion." He informed him that he should have an opportunity of justifying himself from the charges "of a breach of orders; of misbehavior before the enemy in not attacking them as he had been directed; and in making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat." "You cannot afford me greater pleasure," was Lee's reply, "than in giving me the opportunity of showing to America the sufficiency of her respective servants. I trust that temporary power of office, and the tinsel dignity attending it, will not be able, by all the mists they can raise, to obfuscate the bright rays of truth." He was on the same day arrested, the charge of disrespect to the commander-in-chief being added to the others; and a court-martial was convened to meet on the fourth of July.

In the spirit of these letters he wrote to Robert Morris, in Congress, the day before his trial: "A hellish plan was formed (and I may say, at least, not discouraged by head-quarters) to destroy for ever my honor and reputation. I shall not trouble you at present with the details of the action, but by all that's sacred, General Washington had scarcely any more to do in it than to strip the dead. The general has the madness to charge me with making a shameful retreat. I never retreated in fact (for till I joined him it was not a retreat, but a necessary, and I may say in my own defence, masterly manœuvre). I say I never retreated, but by his positive orders, who ridiculously sent me out of the field when the victory was assured. Such is my recompense for having sacrificed my friends, my connections, and perhaps my fortune; for having twice extricated this man and his whole army out of perdition; and now having given him the only victory he ever tasted." Parts of this letter he requested him to read to Richard Henry Lee, to Duer, and "others you think prudent."

The court, over which Stirling presided,* began its session on the fourth of July, and adjourned on the twelfth of August, after several interruptions, having found him guilty of all the charges, omitting the term "shameful." Lee was suspended from command for twelve months, a sentence which, with a divided vote,† was confirmed by Congress.

The trial was published by order of Congress. A vindication by Lee was also published, followed by an article which he enclosed to Gates, assailing Washington and defending Conway.

An answer was contemplated by Laurens, who wrote to Hamilton:

"You have seen, and by this time considered, General Lee's infamous publication. I have collected some hints for an answer; but I do not think, either that I can rely upon my own knowledge of facts and style to answer him fully, or that it would be prudent to undertake it without counsel. An affair of this kind ought to be passed over in total silence, or answered in a masterly manner.

"The ancient secretary is the Recueil of modern history and anecdotes, and will give them to us with candor, elegance, and perspicuity. The pen of Junius is in your hand; and I think you will, without difficulty, expose in his defence, letters, and last production, such a tissue of falsehood and inconsistency, as will satisfy the world, and put him forever to silence.

* Besides, were four generals and eight colonels.

† December 5th, 1778.—The votes in Congress were as follows:—

Negatives.—Messrs. Whipple, N. H.; S. Adams, Lovell, Mass.; Carmichael, Maryland; M. Smith, Virginia; Harnett, N. C.; Langworthy, Georgia—7.

Affirmative.—Messrs. Frost, N. H.; Holten, Mass.; Collins, Rhode Island; Sherman, Ellsworth, Connecticut; Scudder, New Jersey; Searle, Pennsylvania; Henry, Maryland; F. L. Lee, Virginia; Penn, Williams, N. C.; Laurens, Drayton, S. C.—13.

"I think the affair will be definitively decided in Congress this day. He has found means to league himself with the *old faction*, and to gain a great many partisans.

Adieu, my dear boy, I shall set out for camp to-morrow."

This purpose was abandoned. Washington had maintained a dignified silence, and it was not becoming that a public vindication should emanate from his military family.

The biting sarcasms and insulting deportment of Lee at the trial, nevertheless, rankled in the breast of Laurens; and soon after the investigation by Congress closed, a challenge was delivered by Hamilton to Lee in his friend's behalf. A duel followed, in which Lee was slightly wounded. He subsequently disavowed the language imputed to him.

Neither Lee nor his friends were silent. Rush writes to Gates: "The influence of a party drove me from public life. I see Lee and Mifflin separated from the throng that occupy the summit of the mountain. See, my good friend, how they beckon to you to retire into the background of the picture with them, before you are thrust from your rank, and degraded in your character, by the slander and persecutions which have ruined them. You have conquered an army, and saved your country. The war is nearly over, so that you cannot retrieve your *ill* fortune, nor atone for your crimes by losing a province or wasting an army hereafter. Nothing but a resignation can save your reputation, or restore you again to the favor of the public."

Lee, in terms of disrespect to Washington unfit to be quoted, also urged Gates to resign. Ere the period of his own sentence had expired, upon a rumor that his commission was to be revoked, he wrote a hurried offensive note

to Congress, and was forthwith dismissed the service. In decorous terms he sought to soften the offence, disavowing a desire to be restored. Degraded and soured, his views changed. "The New England men excepted, the rest of the Americans," he wrote, "though they fancy and call themselves republicans, have not a single republican qualification or idea. They have always a God of the day, whose infallibility is not to be disputed: to him all the people must bow down and sing Hosannas." Ere the war ended General Lee sickened and died, a sad instance of genius, and courage, and character sacrificed to selfish ambition and capricious vanity.

This year terminated the life of a very different person, James Otis, the early, eloquent, enlightened, disinterested, intrepid advocate of the liberty of his country. His zeal in her behalf had shaken his reason, and as he was standing at his door looking into the heavens, a bolt of lightning struck him; a fate, which, in other days, would have been felt to have consecrated the victim.

CHAPTER XVII.

Washington, because of their recent fatigues and the intense heat, proceeded with his army to Brunswick, and thence to Paramus in the Jerseys, on his way to the Hudson. At this place he received the thanks of Congress, which were acknowledged, in his name, by Hamilton. Here also, on the thirteenth of July, advices came of the arrival of a French fleet upon the coast.

France was now looking to ocean triumphs, flattered by the promise of her immense military marine at Brest and Toulon, the former comprising a fleet of forty-five ships of the line, thirty-seven frigates, and eighteen lighter vessels; while at Toulon were twenty-seven high deckers, eighteen frigates, and a large number of corvettes and smaller barks. The officers were nobles of the first rank, wearing their scarlet uniforms and aiguillettes resplendent with gold, with whom, next in command, were associated officers of the blue—rude, hardy men, familiar with the sea. Under the same white flag also sailed, members of the great families of Provence, Brittany, Guienne and Languedoc—Barras, Saint Laurent, Bonneval, pupils of the royal school of the marine. The whole thus composed, formed an indigested, ill-governed mass, whom neither the perils of the sea, nor mid-battle, nor the

laws against duelling could restrain from mutual reproaches and rencontres.

The larger vessels indicate the provinces and cities whose munificent gifts they were, the "Languedoc," the Provence," the "Marseillais," the "Lyons."

The command of the squadron which left Toulon the twelfth of April, now near the American coast, was confided to the Count D'Estaing, a native of Auvergne, and relation of La Fayette, a colonel of a regiment of infantry, appointed a vice-admiral. Such was the discontent at the elevation of a soldier above meritorious and skilful sailors, Bougainville, De Suffren and others, that D'Estaing felt himself compelled to announce from the deck of the Languedoc, his sense of their feelings and his determination to require implicit obedience.*

The Delaware was his place of destination, where, but for his protracted voyage of nearly ninety days, the British fleet under Lord Howe, and, in all probability, the army near Philadelphia, would have been captured. Arriving at its capes, he apprised Congress of the fact, and failing in the great, first object of his mission, proceeded to Sandy Hook.

To carry into effect the orders of Congress, Washington immediately sent forward Colonel Laurens with a letter to D'Estaing, written by Hamilton, advising him of his intended march to the Hudson, when he proposed to approach the enemy's lines near New York, supposing it to be the intention of the French admiral to enter its harbor.

The co-operation of the force under Gates being contemplated, Hamilton requested him to meet Washington in order to a consultation. D'Estaing having sent Major Chouin to confer with him, Washington wrote the admi-

* Capefique, ii. 190.

ral: "The difficulty of doing justice by letters to matters of such variety and importance as those which now engage our deliberations, has induced me to send to you Lieutenant-colonel Hamilton, another of my aides, in whom I place entire confidence. He will be able to make you perfectly acquainted with my sentiments, and to satisfy any inquiries you may think proper to propose; and I would wish you to consider the information he may give you as coming from myself."

Two objects were in view, an attack upon New York, or upon Rhode Island.

The expectation of a French fleet, and the probability of a co-operation with it, among other objects, upon the latter station of the enemy, rendered the selection of the officer to command in that quarter a matter of high moment. The appointment of Putnam was contemplated. Washington learning this purpose, wrote to the committee of co-operation. "They also know with more certainty what will be the determination of Congress respecting General Putnam, and, of course, whether the appointment of him to such a command as that at Rhode Island would fall within their views; it being incumbent on me to observe, that with such materials as I am furnished, the work must go on; whether well or ill, is another matter; if, therefore, he and others are not laid aside, they must be placed where they can least injure the service." *

Sullivan, being charged with the command, was ordered to call for a body of five thousand New England militia, and to prepare for a descent. Though this object should not be pursued, these preparations would distract and deceive the enemy, and throw them off their guard at New York.

On the twentieth of July, Hamilton wrote to Wash-

* March 6, 1778.

ington from Black Point: "He (Count d'Estaing) has had the river sounded, and finds he cannot enter. He will sail for Rhode Island to-morrow evening. In the mean time, he is making demonstrations to deceive the enemy, and beget an opinion that he intends to operate in this quarter." Three days after, he wrote to the commander-in-chief from Newark: "I need not suggest to your excellency, that an essential part of the Rhode Island plan, is, to take every possible measure to watch the enemy's motions, and to establish expresses from place to place, to give the Count instant information of any movement among their fleet. This will enable him to be in time to intercept them, should they attempt to evacuate New York, while he is at Rhode Island; and will, in general, facilitate the intercourse and co-operation between him and your excellency." He asked indulgence for not immediately returning, not meaning "to delay more than a moderate attention to my frail constitution may make not improper." To strengthen Sullivan, La Fayette was ordered to march to Providence with a detachment of the best troops; and Colonel Laurens was despatched thither to receive D'Estaing.

The recent treaties with France had raised the expectation of the French officers, seeking commissions in the American army. Annoyed by their importunities, Washington again wrote in warm terms discouraging their preferment. Indicating the danger that the experienced American officers would resign, he asks—"Is it consistent with justice or prudence to promote these military fortune hunters at the hazard of your army? Baron Steuben, I now find, is also wanting to quit his inspectorship for a command in the line. This will be productive of much discontent to the brigadiers. In a word, although I think the Baron an excellent officer, I do most devoutly wish,

that we had not a single foreigner among us except the Marquis de La Fayette, who acts from very different principles from those which govern the rest." In a subsequent letter to the President of Congress, from Hamilton's pen, he stated the Baron's intention to resign, admitted his usefulness, but deprecated his having an actual and permanent command in the line, "as productive of much dissatisfaction and extensive ill consequences."

On the same day, the twenty-sixth of July, Hamilton wrote to Boudinot, suggesting expedients to retain the services of Steuben, and to save the feelings of his fellow-soldiers:

"Baron Steuben will do me the honor to deliver you this. He waits upon Congress in a temper which I very much regret—discontented with his situation, and almost resolved to quit the service. You know we have all the best opinion of this gentleman's military merit, and shall of course consider his leaving the army as a loss to it. Whether any expedient can be adopted to reconcile difficulties, and retain him in the service, at the same time that no disgust is given to others who ought not to be disgusted, I cannot certainly determine. But I should conceive it would not be impossible to find such an expedient. You have no doubt heard while you were with the army, of the obstacles thrown in his way by many of the general officers, excited to it by Lee and Mifflin, as I believe, in the execution of the inspectorship; and you have, it is equally probable, heard of the arrangement the General was in a manner obliged to adopt, to silence the clamors which existed among them, and place the inspectorate upon a footing more conformable to their ideas. The opposition the Baron met with in this case was one cause of dissatisfaction to him. In our march from Brunswick, as the Baron was unemployed, and there was

a great deficiency of general officers, notwithstanding the ideas of the army are against giving a command in the line to a person vested with an office similar to that held by him, the General ventured to give him the temporary command of a division during the march, in consequence of which the command of a wing devolved upon him. This was a source of offence to many. When we came near the White Plains the General thanked him in general orders for his services, and requested he would resume the exercise of his former office. To this, on account of the opposition he had already met with, and from the original plan for the inspectorship being mutilated, he discovered very great disinclination, and expressed desire to preserve a command in the line; and from some conversation we have had together, I apprehend he meant to resign his present appointment, if he cannot have a command suited to his rank annexed to it. You will see by the General's letters what are his sentiments both with respect to the duties of the inspectorship, and the Baron's holding a command in the line. Far be it from me to wish to contravene his views; you may be assured they cannot be essentially departed from without very serious inconvenience. But if any thing could be done consistent with them to satisfy the Baron, it would be extremely desirable. Perhaps the principle on which the General's arrangement is formed, may be preserved, and at the same time, the objects of the inspectorship enlarged, so as to render it a more important employment. Perhaps a resolution of Congress giving the Baron a right to be employed on detachments, might, for the present, compensate for the want of a permanent command in the line, and might not be disagreeable to the officers. You can sound him on these heads. I need not caution you that this is a matter of great delicacy and importance,

and that every step taken in it ought to be well considered."

The suggestion of Hamilton was met by Congress so far as to request him in a formal vote "to repair to Rhode Island, and give his advice and assistance to General Sullivan and the army under his command."

Greene was now ordered to take command of a part of the troops near Rhode Island, the residue of the detachments to be in charge of La Fayette. This arrangement was communicated to him in a letter by Hamilton in behalf of Washington, in well chosen terms. La Fayette acceded to it in a most becoming manner.

D'Estaing arrived off Rhode Island before the army of co-operation was ready to act. In the interval, the British fleet, being reinforced, sailed for New Port. A concerted movement of the French and Americans upon the enemy was to be made on the tenth of August. Two days previous, D'Estaing sailed up the channel between Rhode and Conanicut Islands, under fire of their batteries, and the enemy, about six thousand strong, retired within their lines. On the appointed day, the Americans crossed from the main to Rhode Island, when they learned that Lord Howe being seen in the offing, D'Estaing had gone to sea in hope of meeting him. A tempest dispersed them. The admiral's ship was dismasted. He decided to repair to Boston in obedience to his instructions to proceed there in case of disaster.

The high wrought expectations of the country and of the army from the co-operation of France, were now a second time disappointed. Greene resolved, in concert with La Fayette, to induce D'Estaing to sail for Rhode Island. His fleet appearing, on the twentieth off New Port, they waited upon him on shipboard, presenting a letter from Sullivan, remonstrating against his withheld aid.

D'Estaing did not comply. The insubordination of his officers, anxious to thwart him in any measures that would confer upon him distinction, was now seen. They advised him to repair to Boston. He surrendered his own wishes to their unanimous importunity. Sullivan wrote him again, sending an offensive protest, signed by all the general officers at Rhode Island, except La Fayette.* Irritated by this unwise act, he sailed to Boston. Sullivan, thus disappointed, on the twenty-eighth of August, withdrew his army, reduced by desertion, to the northern part of the island, waiting the future co-operation of D'Estaing. The British pursued him. The Americans encamped, protected by a redoubt. An attempt was made to turn their right flank, and to carry the redoubt. Greene met and defeated the enemy, who retired to a strong position. The action was not resumed. Advised by Greene of the discontents which had arisen with the French, Washington, with the pen of Hamilton, expressed his wish, "the utmost harmony should prevail, as it is essential to success, and that no occasions may be omitted on your part to cultivate it." A hope was intimated of a "complete reduction of the enemy's force." "If the fact is otherwise, let me beseech you to guard against sorties and surprises. The enemy, depend upon it, will fall like a strong man, will make many sallies, and endeavor to possess themselves of or destroy your artillery, and should they once put the militia into confusion, the consequences may be fatal." A letter from Washington, written by Hamilton, the day before the recent action, advised Sullivan of the appearance of a movement by the British in New York, and remarked: "I will just add a hint, which, made use of in time, may prove important, and answer a very salutary purpose. Should the expedition fail, through the

* Marshall, i. 265.

abandonment of the French fleet, the officers concerned will be apt to complain loudly. But prudence dictates that we should put the best face upon the matter, and to the world attribute the removal to Boston to necessity. The reasons are too obvious to need explaining. The principal one is, that our British and internal enemies would be glad to improve the least matter of complaint and disgust between us and our new allies into a serious rupture." A letter to the same effect was on the same day addressed, in behalf of Washington, by Hamilton, to General Heath at Boston. "It is our duty," he observed, "to make the best of our misfortunes, and not to suffer passion to interfere with our interest and the public good." The intelligence of the movement of the enemy did not come too soon. Sullivan obeyed the advice, and retired from Rhode Island with his whole force, and the next day, Sir Henry Clinton with a reinforcement of four thousand men arrived. Thus the American army was saved.

On the same day, Hamilton wrote in behalf of the commander-in-chief to Governor Clinton: "I am sorry to inform you that the French fleet left Rhode Island bound to Boston. Our troops were still on the island, and, of course, in a very precarious situation. The reasons for this conduct were—the damage suffered in the late storm, the apprehension of Byron's being on the coast, and the orders of the French king, that in case of misfortune or a superior naval force, the fleet was immediately to repair to Boston, as a secure post and a place of rendezvous for any reinforcement which should be sent.

"Different opinions will be entertained on the propriety of the measure; but we ought all to concur in giving it the most favorable coloring to the people. It should be ascribed to necessity resulting from the injury sustained by the storm."

The cautionary advice to Sullivan came too late. Three days prior to its date, La Fayette wrote to Washington explaining the conduct of his relative D'Estaing, and stating the excitement which prevailed: "Could you believe, that forgetting any national obligation, forgetting what they were owing to that same fleet, what they were yet to expect from them, and instead of resenting their accidents as those of allies and brothers, the people turned mad at their departure ; and wishing them all the evils in the world, did treat them as a generous one would be ashamed to treat the most inveterate enemies.—I am more upon a warlike footing in the American lines than when I come near the British lines at New Port." He referred to a recent general order of Sullivan: * "The General yet hopes the event will prove America able to procure that by her own arms, which her allies refuse to assist her in obtaining." At the instance of La Fayette he issued an order qualifying this ill-judged paper.

La Fayette also wrote a private letter to Hamilton on the subject of these differences. On the first of September he again wrote to him * regretting his own absence from the recent engagement. "The two retreats do honor to the troops and to General Sullivan who conducted them perfectly. Communicate to me in a long letter, my dear Hamilton, what you think on what has been done, what is to be done, and what can be done en suite. The unfortunate Toussard lost his arm in one of the most valorous actions ever performed. The affairs on which I wrote you my complaints are a little quieted, but to take Rhode Island we want General Washington."

On the same day, Hamilton wrote again in behalf of Washington to Sullivan: "The disagreement between the army under your command and the fleet, has given me

* Memoirs of La Fayette, i. 191. † Hamilton's Works, i. 68.

very singular uneasiness. The continent at large is concerned in our cordiality, and it should be kept up by all possible means, consistent with our honor and policy. First impressions, you know, are generally longest remembered, and will serve to fix in a great degree our national character among the French. In our conduct towards them we should remember, that they are a people old in war, very strict in military etiquette, and apt to take fire where others scarcely seem warmed. Permit me to recommend, in the most particular manner, the cultivation of harmony and good agreement, and your endeavors to destroy that ill humor which may have got into the officers. It is of the greatest importance, also, that the soldiers and the people should know nothing of the misunderstanding, or, if it has reached them, that ways may be used to stop its progress and prevent its effects." Greene was at the same time urged, "to conciliate that animosity, which I plainly perceive, by a letter from the marquis, subsists between the American officers and the French in our service. This, you may depend, will extend itself to the Count, and to the officers and men of his whole fleet, should they return to Rhode Island; unless, upon their arrival there, they find a reconciliation has taken place. The marquis speaks kindly of a letter from you to him on the subject. He will therefore take any advice coming from you in a friendly light; and, if he can be pacified, the other French gentlemen will of course be satisfied, as they look up to him as their head."

A most conciliatory letter was also on the same day addressed by Hamilton to La Fayette, urging his good offices in calming the rising storm.

His view of the conduct of Sullivan is disclosed in a private letter to Boudinot written likewise the same day, giving expression to his own sense of what was due to a

gallant ally: "You know the feuds and discontents which have attended the departure of the French fleet from Rhode Island.

"You are probably not uninformed of the imprudence of General Sullivan on the occasion, particularly in the orders he issued charging our allies with refusing to assist us. This procedure was the summit of folly, and has made a very deep impression upon the minds of the Frenchmen in general, who naturally consider it as an unjust and ungenerous reflection on their nation.

"The stigmatizing an ally in public orders, and one with whom we meant to continue in amity, was certainly a piece of absurdity without parallel. The Frenchmen expect the State will reprobate the conduct of their general, and by that means make atonement for the stain he has attempted to bring upon French honor. Something of this kind seems necessary, and will in all likelihood be expected by the court of France, but the manner of doing it suggests a question of great delicacy and difficulty, which I find myself unable to solve.

"The temper with which General Sullivan was actuated was too analogous to that which appeared in the generality of those concerned with him in the expedition, and to the sentiments prevailing among the people. Though men of discretion will feel the impropriety of his conduct, yet there are too many who will be ready to make a common cause with him against any attempt of the public authority to convince him of his presumption, unless the business is managed with great address and circumspection. The credit universally given him for a happy and well conducted retreat, will strengthen the sentiments in his favor, and give an air of cruelty to any species of disgrace which might be thrown upon a man, who will be thought rather to deserve the esteem and ap-

plause of his country. To know how to strike the proper string will require more skill than I am master of; but I would offer this general hint, that there should be a proper mixture of the *sweet* and bitter in the potion which may be administered.

"I am sure it will give you pleasure to have heard, that our friend Greene did ample justice to himself on this expedition; and that Laurens was as conspicuous as usual. But while we celebrate our friends and countrymen, we should not be forgetful of those meritorious strangers, who are sharing the toils and dangers of America. Without derogating from the merit of the other French gentlemen who distinguished themselves, Mr. Toussard may be justly allowed a pre-eminent place. In the enthusiasm of heroic valor, he attempted, single and unseconded, to possess himself of one of the enemy's field-pieces, which he saw weakly defended. He did not effect it, and the loss of his arm was the price of his bravery—his horse was shot under him at the same time; but we should not the less admire the boldness of the exploit from a failure in the success. This gentleman has now, in another and more signal instance, justified the good opinion I have long entertained of him, and merited by a fresh testimony of his zeal, as well as a new stroke of misfortune, the consideration of Congress. The splendid action he has now performed, and for which he has paid so dear, should neither be concealed from the public eye, nor the public patronage. You are at liberty to commit this part of my letter to the press. With the most affectionate attachment."

Congress passed a resolution a few days after, thanking Sullivan and his army "for their fortitude and bravery in the action of the twenty-ninth of August, in which they repulsed the British force, and maintained the field,"

and declared "their high sense of the patriotic exertions made by the four Eastern States in the late expedition to Rhode Island." A motion for an inquiry into the causes of its failure was defeated by the previous question.

Many of the various duties of service performed by Hamilton have been shown. He is now seen in a new aspect as the correspondent in behalf of the commander-in-chief, with officers high in the confidence of the new ally of the United States. The courteous and graceful tone of his letters was very grateful to men of rank and distinction, educated in the most polished court of the world, and habituated to measure the intercourse of life, not less by the manner than by the substance. It will be seen, that Hamilton met the case with all the delicacy and tact of a refined nature, mingled with the simple frankness of a young soldier.* In this spirit he wrote several soothing letters to D'Estaing in the name of Washington: "The importance of the fleet under your command to the common cause, and the interest I take in your personal concerns, would not permit me but to be deeply affected with the information of the disappointment and injuries you sustained in the late unfortunate storm. I flatter myself, and I most ardently hope my countrymen will exert themselves, to give you every aid in their power, that you may, as soon as possible, recover from the damage you have suffered, and be in a condition to renew your efforts against the common enemy."

This letter bears date the second of September. He again wrote to him for the commander-in-chief, on the

* Dewitt's Life of Washington, i. 147: "Himself, so full of simplicity and reserve, he takes, with the French, a tone of courtesy almost complimentary. He offers his friendship to D'Estaing, he recalls to La Fayette the old intimacy which unites them, and cures, by kind words, the wound given to their self-love," ascribing these letters to Washington.

twenty-seventh of October: "I rejoice with you in the prospect of your being so soon in a state to resume the sea. I cannot but ardently desire, that an opportunity may be soon afforded you of again exerting that spirit of well directed activity and enterprise, of which you have already given proof so formidable to our enemies, and so beneficial to the common cause. It is to be hoped our next accounts from Europe will manifest, that the court of Spain has properly estimated the value of the present moment, and has united her power to that of France, to give a decisive blow to the haughty dominion which Britain has so long affected to maintain over the sea. The satisfaction I feel in looking forward to this event, is augmented by the illustrious part I am persuaded you will act in accomplishing it."

D'Estaing appreciated the tone of this letter. Stating that Mr. Holker would make an interesting communication in his name, he wrote to Washington: "I entreat you not to confide the secret to any person, except Colonel Hamilton. His talents and his personal qualities have secured to him for ever my esteem, my confidence, my friendshp." In reply to this and another letter, Hamilton, in the name of Washington, remarked: "Your excellency's sentiments give value to my own on the utility of some well-combined system of fortification for the security of our principal seaport towns.

"The predatory war which the enemy threaten, and have actually carried on in several instances, and which they have the opportunity to repeat, give additional force to the other reasons for a measure of that nature. I impatiently expect the arrival of Mr. Holker to confer with me on the important objects with which he will be charged. I shall cautiously observe the secrecy you desire. Colonel Hamilton's high respect for your excellency

cannot permit him to be insensible to so flattering a mark of your confidence and friendship, as the exception in his favor affords."

These soft words soothed the justly wounded spirit of the French admiral, and time sufficient elapsing for the mind of New England to calm, Congress declared, the Count "hath behaved as a brave and wise officer, and his excellency and the officers and men under his command, have rendered every benefit to these States, which the circumstances and nature of the service would admit of, and are fully entitled to the regard of the friends of America." These with other encomiastic expressions were ordered to be transmitted to him.

The arrival of a British naval reinforcement indicated the necessity of measures for the protection of the French squadron lying at Boston. With this view a large detachment was ordered into Connecticut to be within supporting distance of the troops at Boston and those upon the Hudson, whichever should be the object of the enemy. Washington having encamped at White Plains, the works in the Highlands and the adjacent posts and detachments came under his immediate supervision. Delicacy to Gates, and expedience, both prompted his being placed in a separate command. Hamilton, over the signature of Washington, addressed him an order giving him charge of this detachment. He was subsequently ordered by Congress to Boston.

A letter of General McDougall to Governor Clinton thus depicts Gates: "I understand he is gone to Boston. I know he was exceedingly impatient under command, and from his known temper, I suspect he prefers being the first man of a village to the second in Rome. He has little to do there, but the service will not suffer by his being at a post of ease and security. He is the most credu-

lous in his profession of any man I ever knew, who had seen so much service. He has the weakest mind to combine circumstances to form a judgment, of any man I ever knew of his plausible and specious appearance. In short, he is as weak as water. The Lord of Hosts have mercy on that army, whose movements must depend on his combination of the military demonstrations of an enemy. God avert so great a judgment to America, as his having the chief command of her armies. It is fortunate for America, Burgoyne was so rash as to put himself in the position he did; and that there was no other route for him to Albany than the one he took, or he would not have been an American prisoner." Yet the correspondent of Gates in Congress was indulging in sarcasms upon Washington: "In the name of America," Lovell writes him, "what plan is to be pursued? Is Lord Howe at liberty to come and go as he pleases? Is not his fleet essential to the safety of Clinton? May he cover New York and Rhode Island alternately as he pleases?" Again he wrote him before his departure for Boston: "But here let me ask you whether any chief ever had so little true intelligence as General Washington? Are not spies to be had for money? We shall do great things when we get President Schuyler here. I think that is one of the next measures. I am not altogether without suspicion that some mean practices may take place in your present quarters."

The cautionary measures against a surprise by the enemy being taken, Washington's attention was now turned to the possibility of a new effort for the liberation of Canada, which had been suggested by La Fayette, and contemplated the co-operation of a body of French troops to proceed against Quebec. Having submitted to a board of general officers a series of questions as to the force

there, and the dispositions of the inhabitants "to unite with the Independent States of America," their report was communicated to Congress in a letter from the pen of Hamilton.

"The expediency of the undertaking," it is observed, "in a military point of view, will depend on the enemy's evacuating these States, and on the reinforcements they may send into Canada. While they keep their present footing, we shall find employment enough in defending ourselves without meditating conquests; or, if they send a large addition of strength into that country, it may require greater force and more abundant supplies on our part, to effect its reduction, than our resources may admit. But, if they should leave us, and their other exigencies should oblige them to neglect Canada, an event which is not impossible, we may derive essential advantages from a successful expedition there; and if it should be thought advisable, there is no time to be lost in making preparations, particularly if the idea of carrying it on in the winter is pursued.

"The great importance of the object, both in a military and political light, demands the sanction and concurrence of Congress before any steps can be taken towards it with propriety. The peculiar preparations which will be necessary from the peculiar nature of the enterprise, are an additional motive with me for requesting thus early their determination."

The plan, if the expedition were undertaken, was, owing to the large naval force of the enemy on the lakes, to penetrate by way of the frontier of Connecticut.

Orders were given to provide magazines and forage in that State, in the contingency of the proposed invasion. If it were abandoned, they would be convenient, from recent indications of the enemy, to transfer their operations

to New England. Should such be their policy, the safety of Boston would be a primary object. With this view, General Du Portail, the chief engineer of the army, was ordered there. A letter from Hamilton to Heath, in the name of Washington, stated his object would be "to examine into the nature and condition of the fortifications erected or being erected on the land side, and to form a plan for a more complete system so far as may be necessary, or circumstances will permit. This is to be combined on the principle of a co-operation with the French fleet for mutual defence."

The enemy's force was in two principal divisions; that in New York and its dependencies numbered thirteen thousand, the other in Rhode Island consisted of about five thousand. Intelligence being received of preparations for a considerable embarkation of troops, a council of war was convened, and the questions submitted in a paper prepared by Hamilton: "Whether the army should be held in a collected state during the winter and where? and whether it shall be distributed into cantonments, and in what particular manner? What precautions should be adopted, in either case, to shelter the troops and procure subsistence both of provisions and forage?"

The American force in New York and the Jerseys was about fifteen thousand, in Providence and its dependencies about thirty-five hundred Continentals and State troops."

In respect to the proposed expedition to Canada, the disposition of the troops and the selection of winter quarters, the policy of the enemy was the controlling consideration. Frequent letters were addressed by Hamilton to D'Estaing communicating intelligence, but it was exceedingly difficult to form an opinion.

Hamilton gives his own view in a private letter:* "It

* Hamilton's Works, i. 70.

is a question very undecided in my mind whether the enemy will evacuate or not. Reasoning *a priori*, the arguments seem to be strongest for it from the exhausted state of the British resources, the naked condition of their dominions every where, and the possibility of a Spanish war. But on the other hand, naval superiority must do a great deal in the business. This, I think, considering all things, appears clearly enough to be on the side of Britain. The sluggishness of Spain affords room to doubt her taking a decisive part. The preserving posts in these States will greatly distress our trade, and give security to the British West India trade. They will also cover the West Indies, and restrain any operations of ours against the British dominions on this continent. These considerations and the depreciated state of our currency, will be strong inducements to keep New York and Rhode Island, if not with a view to conquest, with a view to temporary advantages, and making better terms in a future negotiation.

"From appearances, the great delay which attends the embarkation, the absolute tranquillity of the post at Rhode Island, where there is no kind of preparation for leaving it, and some other circumstances, seem to indicate an intention to remain. On the other hand, besides the general appearances I have already mentioned, their inattention to the petition of the refugees and the not raising new works, are strong additional reasons for going away. I think it most probable, if they were determined to continue a garrison, that they would give most explicit assurances to their friends, in order to encourage their proposal, and engage them to aid in maintaining it. I think also they would contract their works, to be better proportioned to the number of the garrison, and of course more defensible, by throwing a chain of fortifications across the narrow part of the Island. The depreciation of our curren-

cy casts a gloom on our prospects, but my sentiments on this subject are rather peculiar. I think, bad as it is, it will continue to draw out the resources of the country a good while longer, and especially if the enemy make such detachments, of which there is hardly a doubt, as will oblige us to act on the defensive.

This will make our public expenditures infinitely less, and will allow the States leisure to attend to the arrangements of their finances, as well as the country tranquillity to cultivate its resources."

In the fleet commanded by D'Estaing, came the Sieur Gerard de Rayneval, Syndic of Strasburg and secretary of the council of state, accredited as minister plenipotentiary from the king of France. To increase the effect of this acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the United States, a public audience was appointed by Congress on the sixth of August.

Richard Henry Lee and Samuel Adams were selected to present him. They approached in a coach drawn by six horses caparisoned for the great occasion. Gerard gave assurances of the friendship of the king and of his "desire to establish the repose and prosperity of the United States upon an honorable and solid foundation." These assurances were reciprocated in warm and becoming terms; and on the fourteenth of September, Franklin was elected minister to France.

The instructions to govern him in his mission became a subject of long and earnest consideration. They were not completed until late in October, and embraced a detailed plan for the conquest of Canada. This plan contemplated a movement upon Detroit by way of Pittsburg, an attack upon Fort Niagara by way of Wyoming and by the Mohawk, the occupation of Oswego and the assembling of five thousand men in Connecticut, to pene-

trate by way of the river St. Francis. These operations were to be effected by the American troops. At the same time, a body of French soldiers were to enter the St. Laurence and capture Quebec, which, it was supposed, they would find "defenceless."

A copy of this plan was submitted by Congress to Washington in order to obtain his views, and he was directed to get exact intelligence of the military and naval strength in that province.

The preparation of an opinion on this very important project was confided to Hamilton. A full examination of the subject in its military aspects was communicated to Congress in a letter written by him, in the name of Washington:

This official letter was enclosed in a private letter to the President of Congress, also from his pen, bearing date the fourteenth of November.

"This will be accompanied by an official letter on the subject of the proposed expedition against Canada. You will perceive I have only considered it in a military light, indeed I was not authorized to consider it in any other; and I am not without apprehensions that I may be thought, in what I have done, to have exceeded the limits intended by Congress. But my solicitude for the public welfare, which I think deeply interested in this affair, will, I hope, justify me in the eyes of all those who view things through that just medium.

"I do not know, sir, what may be your sentiments in the present case, but whatever they are, I am sure I can confide in your honor and friendship, and shall not hesitate to unbosom myself to you on a point of the most délicate and important nature. The question of the Canadian expedition in the form it now stands, appears to me one of the most interesting that has hitherto agitated

our national deliberations. I have one objection to it, untouched in my public letter, which is, in my estimation, insurmountable, and alarms all my feelings for the true and permanent interests of my country. This is the introduction of large bodies of French troops into Canada, and putting them in possession of the capital of that province, attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion, and former connection of government.

"I fear this would be too great a temptation to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy. Let us realize for a moment the striking advantages France would derive from the possession of Canada; the acquisition of an extensive territory abounding in supplies for the use of her islands; the opening a vast source of the most beneficial commerce with the Indian nations, which she might then monopolize; the having ports of her own on this continent independent of the precarious good will of an ally; the engrossing the whole trade of Newfoundland whenever she pleased, the finest nursery of seamen in the world; the security afforded to her islands; and finally the facility of awing and controlling these States, the natural and most formidable rival of every maritime power in Europe. Canada would be a solid acquisition to France on all these accounts, and because of the numerous inhabitants, subjects to her by inclination, who would aid in preserving it under her power against the attempt of every other.

"France, acknowledged for some time past the most powerful monarchy in Europe by land, able now to dispute the empire of the sea with Great Britain, and if joined with Spain, I may say certainly superior, possessed of New Orleans on our right, and Canada on our left, and seconded by the numerous tribes of Indians in our rear from one extremity to the other, a people so generally

friendly to her, and whom she knows so well to conciliate, would, it is much to be apprehended, have it in her power to give law to these States.

"Let us suppose that when the five thousand French troops (and under the idea of that number twice as many might be introduced), were entered the City of Quebec, they should declare an intention to hold Canada, as a pledge and security for the debts due to France from the United States, or, under other specious pretences, hold the place, till they can find a bone for contention, and, in the meanwhile, should excite the Canadians to engage in supporting their pretensions and claims; what should we be able to say with only four or five thousand men to carry on the dispute? It may be supposed, that France would not choose to renounce our friendship by a step of this kind, as the consequence would probably be a reunion with England on some terms or other, and the loss of what she had acquired in so violent and unjustifiable a manner, with all the advantages of an alliance with us. This, in my opinion, is too slender a security against the measure to be relied on. The truth of the position will entirely depend on naval events. If France and Spain should unite, and obtain a decided superiority by sea, a reunion with England would avail very little, and might be set at defiance. France, with a numerous army at command, might throw in what number of land forces she thought proper, to support her pretensions; and England, without men, without money, and inferior in her favorite element, could give no effectual aid to oppose them. Resentment, reproaches, and submission seem to be all that would be left us. Men are very apt to run into extremes. Hatred to England may carry some into excess of confidence in France, especially when motives of gratitude are thrown into the scale. Men of this description would be

unwilling to suppose France capable of acting so ungenerous a part. I am heartily disposed to entertain the most favorable sentiments of our new ally, and to cherish them in others to a reasonable degree. But it is a maxim founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interests; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it. In our circumstances we ought to be particularly cautious; for we have not yet attained sufficient vigor and maturity to recover from the shock of any false step into which we may unwarily fall.

"If France should even engage in the scheme, in the first instance, with the purest intentions, there is the greatest danger that, in the progress of the business, invited to it by circumstances, and, perhaps, urged on by the solicitations and wishes of the Canadians, she would alter her views.

"As the marquis clothed his proposition when he spoke of it to me, it would seem to have originated wholly with himself; but it is far from impossible that it had its birth in the cabinet of France, and was put into this artful dress to give it the readier currency. I fancy that I read in the countenances of some people on this occasion, more than the disinterested zeal of allies. I hope I am mistaken, and that my fears of mischief make me refine too much, and awaken jealousies that have no sufficient foundation.

"But, upon the whole, sir, to waive every other consideration, I do not like to add to the number of our national obligations. I would wish as much as possible to avoid giving a foreign power new claims of merit for services performed to the United States, and would ask no assistance that is not indispensable.

"I am, with the truest attachment and the most perfect confidence, &c."

Two days* after the date of this letter, Hamilton, over the signature of Washington, wrote to the President of Congress in consequence of apprehensions entertained by New Jersey of an attack upon her western frontier: "These depredations of the enemy give me the most serious concern. I lament that we have not yet had it in our power to give them an effectual check. I am perfectly convinced that the only certain way of preventing Indian ravages, is to carry the war vigorously into their own country; but as this is thought impracticable at this season of the year, from the state of the weather and other circumstances, I fear we must content ourselves for the present with some defensive precautions." These were taken.

An effort was now made for the exchange of the troops captured at Saratoga.

A proposal for this purpose had recently been received from Sir Henry Clinton. This proposal was submitted by Washington to Congress, and a resolution passed the nineteenth of November, directing him to appoint commissioners to treat with those appointed by the British commander-in-chief. The basis of the exchange was to be, first, officers of equal rank; next, if necessary, an equivalent of inferior for superior officers; if this should leave any officers unexchanged, an equivalent of privates in exchange for such officers—to be settled. Hamilton and Harrison were appointed by Washington, and on the eleventh of December they met Colonels Hyde and O'Hara at Perth Amboy. An exchange was proposed by the latter of one-half of the officers for an equal number of officers, and for the residue, privates according to a proportion to be arranged. This proposal being a departure from the terms authorized by Congress, and

* Nov. 16.

which had been communicated to Sir Henry Clinton as preliminary, was rejected. The negotiation was thus at an end. To satisfy the public mind, the correspondence was published. The same day, the letter from Washington in relation to the Canadian expedition, was referred to a committee of Congress.

Reluctant to abandon the project, while assenting to the force of the dissuasive reasons presented in the letter, they nevertheless reported a resolution which was approved, instructing the commander-in-chief to write to La Fayette and to the envoy to France "very fully, in order that eventual measures might be taken, in case an armament should be sent from France to Quebec, to co-operate therewith to the utmost degree the finances of the States would admit." Laurens, the President, differed from the views of the majority. He wrote a reply to the recent letter received from Washington, expressing an entire concurrence with its opinions, and deprecating any unavoidable increase of the obligations to be incurred to France. "Their report," he stated, "was framed agreeably to his (La Fayette's) wishes, but the House very prudently determined to consult the commander-in-chief previously to a final determination; and, although your excellency's observations are committed, I am much mistaken, if every member in Congress is not decided in his opinion in favor of them."

Washington was placed in the delicate position, either of contravening the wishes of Congress, or of being party to a measure he disapproved. Hamilton again stated his views to that body:*

"The earnest desire I have to render the strictest compliance in every instance to the views and instructions of Congress, cannot but make me feel the greatest uneasi-

* Dec. 13.

ness when I find myself in circumstances of hesitation or doubt with respect to their directions. But the perfect confidence I have in the justice and candor of that honorable body, emboldens me to communicate without reserve, the difficulties which occur in the execution of their present order; and the indulgence I have experienced on every former occasion, induces me to imagine, that the liberty I now take will not meet with their disapprobation.

"I have attentively taken up the report of the committee of the fifth, approved by Congress, on the subject of my letter of the eleventh ultimo, on the proposed expedition into Canada. I have considered it in several lights, and sincerely regret that I should feel myself under any embarrassment in carrying it into execution. Still, I remain of opinion, from a general review of things and the state of our resources, that no extensive system of co-operation with the French, for the complete emancipation of Canada, can be positively decided on for the ensuing year. To propose a plan of perfect co-operation with a foreign power, without a moral certainty of our supplies, and to have that plan actually ratified by the court of Versailles, might be attended, in case of failure in the conditions on our part, with very fatal effects. If I should seem unwilling to submit the plan as prepared by Congress with my observations, it is because I find myself under a necessity, in order to give our minister sufficient ground on which to found an application, to propose something more than a vague and indecisive plan, which, even in the event of a total evacuation of these States by the enemy, might be rendered impracticable in the execution by a variety of insurmountable obstacles. Or, if I retain my present sentiments and act consistently, I must point out the difficulties as they appear to me; which

must embarrass his negotiations, and may disappoint the views of Congress. The line of conduct that I am to observe in writing to our minister at the court of France, does not appear sufficiently delineated. Were I to undertake it, I would be much afraid of erring through misconception. In this dilemma I should esteem it as a particular favor to be excused from writing at all on the subject, especially as it is the part of candor in me to acknowledge that I do not see my way clear enough to point out such a plan for co-operation as I conceive to be consistent with the ideas of Congress, and that will be sufficiently explanatory with respect to time and circumstances, to give efficacy to the measure. But if Congress should still think it necessary for me to proceed in the business, I must request their more definitive and explicit instructions, and that they will permit me, previous to transmitting the intended despatches, to submit them to their determination.

"I could wish to lay before Congress more minutely the state of the army, the condition of our supplies, and the requisites necessary for carrying into execution an undertaking that may involve the most serious consequences. If Congress think this can be done more satisfactorily in a personal conference, I hope to have the army in such a situation before I can receive their answer, as to afford me an opportunity of giving my attendance. I would only add, that I shall cheerfully comply with the directions of Congress relative to making every preparation in our power for an expedition against Niagara, and for such other operations to the northward as time and circumstances shall enable us to carry on. Measures for the purpose have been taken in part for some time past; and I shall pursue them vigorously. The subject has long engaged my contemplation; and I am thoroughly convinced of the expediency and policy of doing every thing

practicable on our part for giving security to our frontiers, by the reduction of those places which facilitate annoying them, and even for accomplishing the annexation of Canada to the Union."

Two days after,* Hamilton wrote in Washington's name to McDougall: "The probable prospects of the next campaign will make it the part of prudence to be turning our attention towards Canada, and to be preparing, as far as our circumstances will permit, for operations in that quarter, either partially against those posts which enable the enemy to distress our frontiers—Niagara, &c., or more extensively the union of that province to the confederacy, as the future posture of our affairs may put it in our power to undertake. Perhaps the more partial plan may better suit with our resources. The reduction of Niagara, if it can be effected, is an event essential to the tranquillity of the States. This cannot be accomplished without destroying the enemy's naval force on Lake Ontario, the means of doing which is what I wish at this time to have your sentiments concerning." Questions were then propounded as to building an American naval force to be launched upon that lake.

The same day Hamilton, in Washington's name, wrote also to Schuyler, congratulating him "on his honorable acquittal with the approbation of Congress,"† conferring with him again as to the Canada expedition. "No person, I know, has it more in his power to judge of the measures proper to be taken, and I am persuaded you will readily

* Dec. 18.

† "Dec. 3, 1778. *Resolved*, That the sentence of the court martial, acquitting Major-general Schuyler, *with the highest honor*, of the charges exhibited against him, be, and hereby is, confirmed." Schuyler had been elected a delegate to Congress early this year, but would not take his seat while this matter was pending, preferring the inquiry should be unbiased and have full scope.

afford your aid in a matter of so great importance, as far as may be consistent with the situation of your public and professional concerns."

The next day, he wrote to Steuben in Washington's name, as to a new arrangement of the office of inspector-general, which he accompanied with a private letter in his own name: "I am sorry that your business does not seem to make so speedy a progress as we all wish, but I hope it will soon come to a satisfactory termination. I wish you to be in a situation to employ yourself usefully and agreeably; and to contribute to giving our military constitution that order and perfection which it essentially wants." General Lee, in his defence, had borne offensively upon Steuben. Hamilton added: "I have read your letter to him with pleasure. It was conceived in terms which the offence merited; and if he had had any feeling, must have been felt by him. Considering the pointedness and severty of your expressions, his answer was certainly a modest one, and proved that he had not a violent appetite for so close a tête-à-tête as you seemed disposed to insist upon. His evasions, if known to the world, would do him little honor. I don't know but I shall be shortly at Philadelphia."

Having completed the arrangements for the winter quarters of the army, Washington proceeded to Philadelphia at the request of Congress. Hamilton accompanied him, and, while there, addressed them a letter on the last day of the year, urging the retention of General Duportail and his assistants in the service. On the first of January, seventy-nine, the plan for the invasion of Canada was finally acted upon by Congress, their decision not improbably influenced by the counsels of Jay, recently elected its President, who, not long before, had conferred with Washington, and entertained similar opinions.

The committee of conference reported, that the negotiation in relation to it, however desirable and interesting it was, should be deferred till circumstances should render "the co-operation of these States more certain, practicable and effectual."

A letter was consequently addressed to La Fayette, stating their determination, "however flattering the object, not to risk a breach of the public faith or the injury of an ally, to whom they are bound by principles of honor, gratitude and affection."

The demoralization of the public councils and the necessity of restoring the character of Congress by the election of a superior class of men, had become more and more obvious.

Washington, in a private letter written at this time to his intimate, Harrison, speaker of the House of Delegates in Virginia, remarked: "What may be the effect of such large and frequent emissions, of the dissensions, parties, extravagance, and general laxity of public virtue, Heaven alone can tell." He besought his exertions to send "the best and ablest men to Congress."

He also wrote privately to Reed, recently elected "President of the executive council of Pennsylvania:" "It gives me sincere pleasure to find, that there is likely to be a coalition of the whigs in your State, a few only excepted, and that the assembly is so well disposed to second your endeavors in bringing those murderers of our cause, the monopolizers, forestallers and engrossers, to condign punishment. It is much to be lamented that each State, long ere this, has not hunted them down as pests to society, and the greatest enemies we have to the happiness of America. I would to God, that some one of the most atrocious in each State was hung in gibbets upon a gallows five times as high as the one prepared by Haman.

No punishment, in my opinion, is too great for the man who can build his greatness upon his country's ruin." *

Hamilton endeavored to check some of these abuses. A plan had been formed in Congress for relieving the distresses of the army. It was intended to be secret. A member of Congress, one of the cabal, divulged it to certain friends, who were charged with having speculated with him in flour. The intended relief to the army was thus, in part, defeated.

Hamilton being informed of the facts, made them the subject of a few essays over the signature of "Publius." "The station of a member of Congress," he eloquently remarked at the close, "is the most illustrious and important of any I am able to conceive. He is to be regarded not only as a legislator, but as a founder of an empire. A man of virtue and ability, dignified with such a trust, would rejoice that fortune had given him birth at a time, and placed him in circumstances, so favorable for promoting human happiness. He would esteem it not more the duty than the privilege and ornament of his office to do good to all mankind. From this commanding eminence, he would look down with contempt upon every mean or interested pursuit.

"To form useful alliances abroad, to establish a wise government at home, to improve the internal resources and finances of the nation, would be the generous objects of his care. He would not allow his attention to be diverted from these to intrigue for personal connections to confirm his own influence, nor would be able to reconcile it, either to the delicacy of his honor, or to the dignity of his pride, to confound in the same person the representative of the commonwealth, and the little member of a trading company. Anxious for the permanent power and

* Washington's Writings, vi. 132.

prosperity of the State, he would labor to perpetuate the union and harmony of the several parts. He would not meanly court a temporary importance by patronizing the narrow views of local interest, or by encouraging dissensions either among the people or in Congress. In council or debate he would discover the candor of a statesman, zealous for truth; and the integrity of a patriot, studious of the public welfare; not the cavilling petulance of an attorney contending for the triumph of an opinion, nor the perverse duplicity of a partisan devoted to the service of a cabal. Despising the affectation of superior wisdom, he would prove the extent of his capacity by foreseeing evils, and contriving expedients to prevent or remedy them. He would not expose the weak sides of the States, to find an opportunity of displaying his own discernment, by magnifying the follies and mistakes of others. In his transactions with individuals, whether with foreigners or countrymen, his conduct would be guided by the sincerity of a man, and the politeness of a gentleman; not by the temporizing flexibility of a courtier, nor the fawning complaisance of a sycophant."

This appeal was not without effect. The State, thus misrepresented in Congress, passed a prudential vote.

CHAPTER XVIII.

During his sojourn at Philadelphia, conferences were held between the commander-in-chief and a committee of Congress. A paper relating to the recruiting and arrangements of the army, and the operations of the next campaign, was submitted to them by Washington. The draft of it is in Hamilton's hand.

"The first and great object," it stated, "is to recruit the army by re-enlisting the men now in it to serve during the war," for which purpose no bounty was to be spared, and "by drafting upon some such plan as had been recommended" at Valley Forge.

"The next object is, to fix some ideas respecting the northern preparations, concerning which the commander-in-chief now finds himself in a dilemma, and respecting the operations of the next campaign in general, in order that measures may be taken systematically. The following questions, on which the foregoing will depend, ought to be considered and decided.

"First. If the enemy retain their present force at New York and Rhode Island, can we assemble a sufficient force and means to expel them?

"Second. If we cannot, can we make a successful attempt against Niagara, and retain a sufficient force at

the same time on the sea-board to keep the enemy within bounds?

"Third. Are our finances equal to eventual preparations for both of those objects?

"If the first is determined in the affirmative, and the enemy keep possession, we ought to direct almost our whole force and exertions to that point; and for the security of our frontiers, endeavor to make some expedition against Detroit and the Indian settlements, by way of diversion. Our preparations ought, then, to be adapted to this plan; and if we cannot conveniently unite our preparations for this object with an expedition against Niagara, we ought to renounce the latter.

"If the first question is answered negatively, and the second affirmatively, and if it is judged expedient to make such an attempt, our preparations ought to have reference principally thereto, and we must content ourselves with a merely defensive conduct elsewhere, and should study economy as much as possible. It is in vain to attempt things which are more the objects of desire than attainment. Every undertaking ought at least to be regulated by the state of our finances, the prospect of our supplies, and the probability of success. Without this, disappointment, disgrace, and an increase of debt, will ensue on our part; exultation and renewed hope on that of the enemy. To determine, therefore, what we can undertake, the state of the army, the prospect of recruiting it, paying, clothing and feeding it, the providing the necessary apparatus for offensive operations; all these matters ought to be well and maturely considered. On them every thing must depend; and however reluctantly we yield, they will compel us to conform to them, as by attempting impossibilities we shall ruin our affairs.

"If the third question is answered affirmatively, which

it is much to be feared cannot be done, then eventual preparations ought to be made for both. We shall then be best able to act according to future circumstances; for though it will be impossible to unite both objects in the execution, yet in the event of the enemy's leaving these States, we should be ready to strike an important blow for the effectual security of our frontiers, and for opening a door to a farther progress to Canada.

"From the investigation of these points another question may possibly result.

"Will not the situation of our affairs, on account of the depreciated condition of our currency, deficiency of bread, scarcity of forage, the exhausted state of our resources in the middle department, and the general distress of the inhabitants, render it advisable for the main body of the army to lie quiet in some favorable position for confining, as much as possible, the enemy to their present posts (adopting, at the same time, the best means in our power to scourge the Indians, and prevent their depredations), in order to save expenses, avoid new emissions, recruit our finances, and give a proper tone to our money for more vigorous measures hereafter?

"In determining a plan of operations for next campaign, much will depend on the prospect of European affairs; what we have to expect from our friends; what they will expect from us; and what the enemy will probably be able to do. These points should be well weighed, and every information concentred to throw light upon them. But upon the whole, it will be the safest and most prudent way to suppose the worst, and prepare for it.

"It is scarcely necessary to say, that the providing ample supplies of arms, clothes, and ordnance stores, is essential, and that an uncertain dependence may not only be hurtful, but ruinous. Their importance demands that

every possible expedient should be, without delay, adopted, towards obtaining these articles, in due season for the purposes of next campaign.

"Heavy cannon, for posts in the Highlands, for battering, and for vessels, if offensive measures are to be pursued, must be immediately forwarded, and in considerable quantity. Large mortars, with a sufficient apparatus, will also be wanted.

"The completing the arrangement of the army, without farther delay, is a matter of great importance, whatever may be our plan. The want of this is the source of infinite dissatisfaction to the officers in general, and continual perplexity to the commander-in-chief. The want of brigadiers is a material inconvenience, and hath been the cause of much relaxation of discipline, discontent, and loss, in several instances."

These remarks are followed by observations, indicating changes in the ordnance department, as suggested by General Knox; in the clothing, and in the hospital departments. The immediate establishment of an inspectorship, on a definite plan, is strongly urged; and an improved arrangement of the engineering department. The communication closes with a reference to the situation of the officers, which is stated "to be so singularly hard, that the bare mention of their case is sufficient to bring it home to the attention and feeling of every man of reflection, and will leave no doubt of the necessity of applying a remedy the most speedy and effectual."

The views taken in this paper, were the ground-work of the deliberations of the committee; and the plan of a defensive campaign, which was ultimately adopted, was enforced by various considerations.

The enemy's force at New York and Rhode Island, was at this time about twelve thousand men. From the

circular position of their posts, the strength of their fortifications, and their shipping, it was believed, that to a successful attempt, double that number of effectives would be necessary. These, both from the rate of wages and the high price of labor, it was impossible to get, beside the extreme difficulty of providing subsistence and forage for so large a number.

For an attack upon the frontier posts of the interior, a body of permanent troops with auxiliaries, to the amount of more than twenty thousand men, was deemed requisite; for whose transportation ships were to be built, boats provided, and greater expense iucurred, than would be necessary for an attack on New York.

From the objections to these plans an expedition against the Indians was free, and attended with much less expense, while the country would, in the interval, be left to repose, the disbursements of the year diminished—a general system of economy might be adopted, and enlistments made to continue during the year. "If this plan is determined upon, every measure of government ought to correspond. The most uniform principle of economy should pervade every department. We should not be frugal in one part, and prodigal in another. We should contract, but we should consolidate our system. The army, though small, should be of a firm and permanent texture. Every thing possible should be done to make the situation of the officers and soldiers comfortable, and every inducement offered to engage men during the war. The most effectual plan that can be devised for enlisting those already in the army, and recruiting in the country, ought to be carried into immediate execution."

But as to this policy, indicated more by the national necessities than by any other considerations, there were grounds of serious hesitation. "The very inactivity, it

was naturally feared, might be attributed to the weakness of the United States, and thus affect their credit and importance abroad, and produce a most serious effect on their negotiations in Europe. It might also discourage the people, inspirit the disaffected, and give time for the discontented to combine and produce extensive divisions, while a succesful blow given to the enemy, in the reduced state of the army, might compel them to evacuate the United States, to which there would be little probability of their return." But to this the finances of the country were incompetent; and it was believed no adequate force could be assembled.

After deliberate consideration, the Niagara expedition was laid aside. Operations against the Indians were to be undertaken on a limited scale; and a defensive plan was agreed upon, only to be departed from in the contingency of such reinforcements from France, as would justify drawing upon the resources of the country to an extent that would ensure the accomplishing some capital object. These views are set forth in a letter of the fifteenth of January to the committee of Congress from Hamilton's pen. Five days later, a letter, also from his pen, was addressed to the same committee as to the situation of the officers of the army.

Stating that the new prospects arising from the treaties with France had diverted their minds from an attention to their distresses, it was urged "that to attach them heartily to the service, their expectations of futurity must be interested. With this view, a half-pay or pensionary establishment for life was recommended, and not for a term of years, on the ground, "that the officer looks beyond a limited period, and naturally flatters himself that he will outlive it." The unpleasant restrictions which attended the resolves for seven years were condemned; pensions for

the widows of the officers were recommended; and to the objection raised to pensions, that they were inconsistent with the maxims of government, it was answered, "that it equally applied to pensions for years as to those for lives." "It is alike a pension, in both cases; in one, for a fixed and determinate period; in the other, for a contingent period." Strongly as these views were taken, it was nevertheless cautiously suggested, "that the subject should not be brought forward unless certain of success; that it was a point on which the officers' feelings were much engaged, and should not be awakened unless gratified."

It was also proposed that they should be provided with clothing by the public at prices proportioned to their pay; that the rations and subsistence they had received, rendered their situation indigent and miserable, and the expedient of a periodical valuation of them was suggested. A plan drafted by him was likewise submitted to this committee, "for paying arrearages of clothing to the troops."

Within a few days after, a plan for a clothing department was proposed, establishing a subordination of officers, and recommending a distinct color and uniform for each State corps, to diminish the expense of competition for the same color, to distinguish the corps from each other, to discriminate merit, and to prevent expense to the officers by frequent changes.

It has been previously observed, that on the appointment of Steuben, a brief plan of an inspectorship had been in part adopted by Congress in the spring of seventy-eight. This plan was subsequently modified and completed in the ensuing month of September, when the number of the regiments was allotted to each State.

The system then introduced, proved imperfect; and having been agreed to in committee, on the twenty-eighth

of January of this year, a new plan for this department was reported by the committee of conference to Congress, and passed on the eighteenth of February following. The report exists among the archives of the government in a rough state; the preamble in another hand, but the body of it, with marks of alteration by him, in the autography of Hamilton;* where may also be found a plan drawn up by him for completing the regiments, and changing their establishment, in which is a project for an annual draft. Inducements for re-enlistments, and the modes of supplying the deficiency, are set forth with great perspicuity, giving the general principles for such a procedure, which, in similar emergencies, might be adopted with advantage.

While these topics were engaging their attention, Congress was called, by a communication from Arthur Lee, and by a conference with the French minister, to a negotiation with Spain, involving points of great moment, the consideration of which is deferred to a subsequent part of this narrative.

In early spring, the enemy, waiting reinforcements, were content to harass and alarm the States adjacent to New York by sudden inroads, which did not advance in the least the great object of the contest, but only served to increase the horrors of war, by invading the unsuspicious security of the settlements near the coast. These incursions were aggravated by being chiefly undertaken by the American refugees; who, forgetting their duty to their country, discarded all regard to the obligations of humanity, and evincing the cruelty, without the courage of other freebooters, rendered doubly afflicting this border warfare.

The debatable ground of Westchester had long been

* Hamilton's Works, i. 168.

a scene of the most wanton enormities. There parties were regularly organized, under the singular denominations of skinners and cow-boys; and, as a natural consequence of this petty warfare, long continued, a great part of the community were demoralized, and each combination formed itself into regular bands of depredators.

But the principal seat of these outrages was in the lower districts of New Jersey, which being easily accessible through its numerous inlets from the ocean, and having a sparse population, was kept in constant alarm. Small vessels were seen continually hovering along the coast, which made in upon them at midnight, carried off all the plunder they could find, fired the houses, murdered all who resisted, and perpetrated shocking barbarities. Bands of robbers roamed over the less-frequented regions, and along the barrens, who, excited to cruelty by their conflicts with the militia, marked their path with rapine and with blood.

The vigilance exerted by Governor Livingston, and the necessary severity exercised upon these outlaws, rendered him an object of their particular hostility, and plans were frequently formed to seize his person. On one occasion, intelligence of his being at a certain spot was given, a party was embodied to carry him off, and two men, bolder than the others, were sent forward to watch his movements. Accident saved him. In the habit of riding at sunrise, he had, on the appointed day, awakened sooner than usual, and had just passed the place selected for his capture or destruction, when the party made their appearance, a few moments too late. "The recent detection," Hamilton wrote to his early friend in behalf of Washington, "of the wicked design you mention, gives me the most sensible pleasure, and I earnestly hope you may be alike successful in discovering and disappointing

every attempt that may be projected against you by your open or concealed enemies. It is a tax, however severe, which all those must pay who are called to eminent stations of trust, not only to be held up as conspicuous marks to the enmity of the public adversaries to their country, but to the malice of secret traitors, and to the envious intrigues of false friends and factions."

At another time a project was devised for carrying off the Speaker of the New Jersey legislature, which was nearly successful.

A similar design was formed on the person of Washington. He had appointed to meet some officers at a designated place. Information was given by a female in the tory interest, and the necessary arrangements were made to seize him, but timely intelligence* frustrated the attempt.

A more serious impression was made by a letter of Governor Livingston, written about this time to Sir Henry Clinton, alleging that he had the most authentic proofs of a general officer under his command having offered a large sum for his assassination in case he could not be taken alive, and intimating that the person of General Clinton might be reached in retaliation, but exempting him from all knowledge of this atrocious proposal. This charge was met on the part of the English commander with an explicit and indignant denial.

The repetition of these attempts suggested the idea of making Sir Henry Clinton a prisoner; and a plan for this

* A partisan officer, a native of New York, called at the shop of Mulligan late in the evening, to obtain a watch-coat. The late hour awakened curiosity. After some inquiries, the officer vauntingly boasted, that, before another day, they would have his rebel General in their hands. This stanch patriot, as soon as the officer left him, hastened unobserved to the wharf, and despatched a billet by a negro, giving information of the design.

purpose was devised and submitted to Washington. He approved it, stating, "I think it one of the most practicable, and surely it will be among the most desirable and honorable things imaginable to take him prisoner." The British general was then occupying a house near the Battery, in New York, situate a few yards from the Hudson river. Intelligence, through spies, had been obtained of the approaches to his bed-chamber. Light whaleboats, with muffled oars, were to be placed under the command of Colonel Humphreys, of Connecticut; and the party, in full preparation, were waiting anxiously the approach of night for the execution of their purpose.

Hamilton, in the interval, became informed of the intended enterprise. Disliking this kind of warfare, he observed to Washington "that there could be little doubt of its success: but, sir, have you examined the consequences of it?" The General inquired, "in what respect?" "Why," replied Hamilton, "it has occurred to me that we shall rather lose than gain, by removing Sir Henry Clinton from the command of the British army, because we perfectly understand his character. By taking him off we only make way for some other, perhaps an abler officer, whose character and dispositions we have to learn." The General acknowledged the force of the objection, and abandoned the project.

The expedition against the Indians was now engaging Washington's attention. Entertaining doubts as to the best mode of employing the troops on the northern frontier in this expedition, a letter written by Hamilton was addressed by Washington to Schuyler. In this letter the reasons for either route are discussed. A plan was then formed, and the detachments of troops were called in to compose the main body.

Advices being received of the return of the French

fleet to the United States, Hamilton prepared a letter to the French minister in the name of Washington: "A clear superiority" of this fleet "over the British naval force in America," was to be "the essential basis to any extensive combined operations." Should explicit assurances be given that Count D'Estaing will proceed with all despatch to New York, with the permission of Congress, Washington engaged to relinquish all the present projects of the campaign, to co-operate for the reduction of New York and Rhode Island. The plan proposed was, that D'Estaing should proceed to Georgia, and in conjunction with the American troops there, destroy the enemy's fleet and army. This accomplished, that he should enter the harbor of New York expeditiously, and take the fleet in that port. Rhode Island would be the next object. These plans, if attended with important successes, "might open a new field of action, and lead to other important events."

In the last days of the previous year a detachment of British troops landed near Savannah; and after a defeat of the American troops under General Robert Howe, took possession of that city with all its military stores. The only remaining force was the garrison of Sunbury, which surrendered soon after to General Prevost, who had moved upon it from Florida. Augusta was also taken possession of, and Georgia was thus reduced to subjection. General Lincoln was ordered to replace Howe, the remnant of whose force he joined near Savannah, whence he moved up that river to recover the interior of the State. South Carolina, it was expected, would be immediately invaded. On the first advices of her danger, Colonel Laurens asked leave to repair to the assistance of his native State. Upon his departure from head-quarters, Hamilton, who had known similar corps in the West In-

dies, suggested the idea of raising a body of black levies for the defence of that State, and gave him a letter of introduction to Jay, the President of Congress:

"Colonel Laurens, who will have the honor of delivering you this letter, is on his way to South Carolina, on a project which, I think, in the present situation of affairs there, is a very good one, and deserves every kind of support and encouragement. This is, to raise two, three, or four battalions of negroes, with the assistance of the government of that State, by contributions from the owners, in proportion to the number they possess. If you should think proper to enter upon the subject with him, he will give you a detail of his plan. He wishes to have it recommended by Congress to the State; and as an inducement, that they would engage to take their battalions into continental pay.

"It appears to me, that an expedient of this kind in the present state of southern affairs, is the most rational that can be adopted, and promises very important advantages. Indeed, I hardly see how a sufficient force can be collected in that quarter without it; and the enemy's operations there are growing infinitely serious and formidable. I have not the least doubt that the negroes will make very excellent soldiers, with proper management; and I will venture to pronounce that they cannot be put in better hands than those of Mr. Laurens. He has all the zeal, intelligence, and enterprise, and every other qualification requisite to succeed in such an undertaking. It is a maxim with some great military judges, that with sensible officers, soldiers can hardly be too stupid; and on this principle it is thought that the Russians would make the best soldiers in the world if they were under other officers than their own. The King of Prussia is among the number who maintains this doctrine, and has a very

emphatic saying on the occasion, which I do not exactly recollect. I mention this because I have frequently heard it objected to the scheme of embodying negroes, that they are too stupid to make soldiers. This is so far from appearing to me a valid objection, that I think their want of cultivation, (for their natural faculties are probably as good as ours,) joined to that habit of subordination which they acquire from a life of servitude, will enable them sooner to become soldiers than our white inhabitants. Let officers be men of sense and sentiment, and the nearer the soldiers approach to machines, perhaps the better.

"I foresee that this project will have to combat much opposition from prejudice and self-interest. The contempt we have been taught to entertain for the blacks, makes us fancy many things that are founded neither in reason nor experience; and an unwillingness to part with property of so valuable a kind, will furnish a thousand arguments to show the impracticability or pernicious tendency of a scheme which requires such sacrifices. But it should be considered, that if we do not make use of them in this way, the enemy probably will, and that the best way to counteract the temptations they will hold out, will be, to offer them ourselves. An essential part of the plan is, to give them their freedom with their swords. This will secure their fidelity, animate their courage, and, I believe, will have a good influence upon those who remain, BY OPENING A DOOR TO THEIR EMANCIPATION. This circumstance, I confess, has no small weight in inducing me to wish the success of the project; for the dictates of humanity and true policy equally interest me in favor of this unfortunate class of men.

"When I am on the subject of southern affairs, you will excuse the liberty I take in saying, that I do not

think measures sufficiently vigorous are pursuing for our defence in that quarter. Except the few regular troops of South Carolina, we seem to be relying wholly on the militia of that and the two neighboring States. These will soon grow impatient of service, and leave our affairs in a miserable situation. No considerable force can be uniformly kept up by militia; to say nothing of the many obvious and well-known inconveniences that attend this kind of troops. I would beg leave to suggest, sir, that no time ought to be lost in making a draft of militia to serve a twelvemonth, from the States of North and South Carolina and Virginia. But South Carolina, being very weak in her population of whites, may be excused from the draft, on condition of furnishing the black battalions. The two others may furnish about three thousand five hundred men, and be exempted, on that account, from sending any succors to this army. The States to the northward of Virginia will be fully able to give competent supplies to the army here; and it will require all the force and exertions of the three States I have mentioned, to withstand the storm which has arisen, and is increasing in the south.

"The troops drafted must be thrown into battalions, and officered in the best manner we can. The supernumerary officers may be made use of as far as they will go. If arms are wanted for their troops, and no better way of supplying them is to be found, we should endeavor to levy a contribution of arms upon the militia at large. Extraordinary exigencies demand extraordinary means. I fear this southern business will become a very *grave* one."

The following extract of a letter from Laurens to Hamilton, dated at Charleston, refers to this subject:

"Ternant will relate to you how many violent struggles I have had between duty and inclination—how much

my heart was with you, while I appeared to be most actively employed here. But it appears to me that I should be inexcusable in the light of a citizen, if I did not continue my utmost efforts for carrying the plan of the black levies into execution, while there remain the smallest hopes of success.

"Our army is reduced to nothing almost, by the departure of the Virginians. Scott's arrival will scarcely restore us to our ancient number. If the enemy destine the reinforcements from Great Britain to this quarter, as in policy they ought to do, that number will be insufficient for the security of our country. The governor, among other matters to be laid before the House of Assembly, intends to propose the completing our continental battalions by drafts from the militia. This measure, I am told, is so unpopular that there is no hope of succeeding in it. Either this must be adopted, or the black levies, or the State will fall a victim to the improvidence of its inhabitants.

"The House of Representatives have had a longer recess than usual, occasioned by the number of members in the field. It will be convened, however, in a few days. I intend to qualify, and make a final effort. Oh, that I were a Demosthenes! The Athenians never deserved a more bitter exprobation than our countrymen.

"General Clinton's movement, and your march in consequence, made me wish to be with you. If any thing important should be done in your quarter, while I am doing daily penance here, and making successless harangues, I shall execrate my stars, and be out of humor with the world. I entreat you, my dear friend, write me as frequently as circumstances will permit, and enlighten me upon what is going forward.

"Adieu. My love to our colleagues. I am afraid I

was so thoughtless as to omit my remembrances to Gibbes. Tell him that I am always his sincere well-wisher, and hope to laugh with him again ere long. Adieu, again. Yours ever.

"P. S. You know my opinion of Ternant's value. His health and affairs call him to the north. If you can render him any services, they will be worthily bestowed. We have not hitherto availed ourselves of his zeal and talent."

Congress had, late in the previous year, "presented" Laurens with a commission as lieutenant-colonel, in testimony of his merits, and recommended Washington to give him "a command agreeable to his rank." Laurens declined the unexpected honor, as injurious to the rights of the officers of the line, and as "an evident injustice to his colleagues in the family of the commander-in-chief." Congress approved his motives. On his proposed departure for South Carolina, they again passed a special resolution granting him a commission.

Hamilton wrote to him, in answer to a letter alluding to this fact:

"Cold in my professions—warm in my friendships—I wish, my dear Laurens, it were in my power, by actions, rather than words, to convince you that I love you. I shall only tell you, that till you bid us adieu, I hardly knew the value you had taught my heart to set upon you. Indeed, my friend, it was not well done. You know the opinion I entertain of mankind, and how much it is my desire to preserve myself free from particular attachments, and to keep my happiness independent of the caprices of others. You should not have taken advantage of my sensibility, to steal into my affections without my consent. But as you have done it, and as we are generally indulgent to those we love, I shall not scruple to par-

don the fraud you have committed, on one condition: that for my sake, if not for your own, you will continue to merit the partiality which you have so artfully instilled into me.

"I have received your two letters; one from Philadelphia, the other from Chester. I am pleased with your success so far; and I hope the favorable omens that precede your application to the Assembly, may have as favorable an issue; provided the situation of affairs should require it, which I fear will be the case. But, both for your country's sake, and for my own, I wish the enemy may be gone from Georgia before you arrive; and that you may be obliged to return, and share the fortunes of your old friends. In respect to the commission which you received from Congress, all the world must think your conduct perfectly right. Indeed, your ideas upon this occasion seem not to have their wonted accuracy; and you have had scruples, in a great measure, without foundation. By your appointment as aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief, you had as much the rank of lieutenant-colonel as any officer in the line. Your receiving a commission as lieutenant-colonel, from the date of that appointment, does not in the least injure or interfere with one of them; unless by virtue of it you are introduced into a particular regiment, in violation of the right of succession, which is not the case at present, neither is it a necessary consequence. As you were going to command a battalion, it was proper you should have a commission; and if this commission had been dated posterior to your appointment as aide-de-camp, I should have considered it derogatory to your former rank, to mine, and to that of the whole corps. The only thing I see wrong in the affair is this: Congress, by their conduct, both on the former and present occasion, appear to have intended to confer a privi-

lege, an honor, a mark of distinction, a something upon you, which they withheld from other gentlemen of the family. This carries with it an air of preference, which, though we can all truly say we love your character and admire your military merit, cannot fail to give some of us uneasy sensations. But in this, my dear, I wish you to understand me well. The blame, if there is any, falls wholly upon Congress. I repeat it, your conduct has been perfectly right, and even laudable;—you rejected the offer when you ought to have rejected it, and you accepted it when you ought to have accepted it; and let me add, with a degree of over-scrupulous delicacy. It was necessary to your project. Your project was the public good; and I should have done the same. In hesitating, you have refined on the refinements of generosity.

"There is a total stagnation of news here. Gates has refused the Indian command. Sullivan is come to take it. The former has lately given a fresh proof of his impudence, his folly, and his *********. 'Tis no great matter; but a peculiarity in the case prevents my saying what.

"Fleury shall be taken care of. All the family send love. In this join the General and Mrs. Washington; and what is best, it is not in the style of ceremony, but sincerity."

Intelligence from Europe favorable to the American cause having been received, a letter was addressed by Hamilton to Jay, for Congress, in the name of Washington, regretting that it "had not yet been given to the public in a manner calculated to attract the attention and impress the minds of the people. It would assist the measures taken to restore our currency, promote the recruiting the army and our other military arrangements, and give a certain spring to our affairs in general."

A letter was also addressed by him to the Board of

War respecting the clothing department, the supply of ordnance, and of arms for the cavalry, objecting to their proposed reduction.

Congress having late in the month of February passed a resolution expressing their desire that an offensive expedition should be undertaken against the Indians in western New York and Pennsylvania, secret preparations were being made. The number of Indian warriors with the persons who had joined them in this region, was estimated at three thousand. The force to be sent against them would be four thousand Continentals, and such aids of militia as might be deemed absolutely necessary. The command of this expedition was tendered to Gates in a letter written by Hamilton. Gates, as has been stated, declined it. "The man who undertakes the Indian service," he wrote to Washington, "should enjoy youth and strength, requisites I do not possess. It therefore grieves me that your excellency should offer me the only command to which I am entirely unequal." In answer to a previous letter, Gates had written a comment on the proposed mode of entering Canada, which he communicated to Congress, containing a reflection upon the commander-in-chief, and a most insulting allusion to Schuyler. A long letter from Washington to Jay, of which the draft is in Hamilton's hand, previously referred to, vindicates his conduct, and exposes Gates. "I am sorry," it is observed, "his conduct to me has not been equally generous, and that he is continually giving me fresh proofs of malevolence and opposition. It will not be doing him injustice to say, that, besides the little, underhand intrigues which he is frequently practising, there has hardly been any great military question in which his advice has been asked, that it has not been given in an equivocal and designing manner, apparently calculated to afford him an opportu-

nity of censuring me, on the failure of whatever measure might be adopted."

As the spring opened, it became important to decide on the operations of the army. The inferiority of the French fleet compelled an abandonment of the contemplated attack upon New York. Gerard having recently visited head-quarters, Hamilton wrote to Gouverneur Morris, in the name of Washington, on the eighth of May "From what he told me, it appears that sufficient assurances cannot be given on points which are essential to justify the great undertaking you had in view at the expense of other operations very interesting; and, indeed, though I was desirous to convince the minister that we are willing to make every effort in our power for striking a decisive blow, yet my judgment rather inclined to the second plan, as promising more certain success with out putting so much to hazard. The relief of the Southern States appears to me an object of the greatest magnitude, and one that may lead to still more important advantages. I feel infinite anxiety on their account. Their internal weakness, disaffection, the want of energy, the general languor that has seized the people at large, make me apprehend the most serious consequences. It would seem, too, as if the enemy meant to transfer the principal weight of the war that way. If it be true that a large detachment has lately sailed from New York, and that Sir Henry Clinton is gone with it, and these should be destined southward, as is most probable, there can be little doubt that this is the present plan. Charleston, it is likely, will feel the next stroke. This, if it succeeds, will leave the enemy in full possession of Georgia, by obliging us to collect our forces for the defence of South Carolina, and will, consequently, open new sources for men and supplies, and prepare the way for a further career. It is to be lamented that the

remoteness and weakness of this army would make it folly to attempt to send any succor from this quarter." A sad picture was given: "The rapid decay of our currency, the extinction of public spirit, the increasing rapacity of the times, the want of harmony in our councils, the declining zeal of the people, the discontents and distresses of the officers of the army, and, I may add, the prevailing security and insensibility to danger, are symptoms, in my eyes, of a most alarming nature. Our army, as it now stands, is little more than the skeleton of an army; and I hear of no steps that are taking to give it strength and substance. When I endeavor to draw together the continental troops for the most essential purposes, I am embarrassed with complaints of the exhausted, defenceless situation of particular States, and find myself obliged, either to resist solicitations, made in such a manner and with such a degree of emphasis as scarcely to leave me a choice, or to sacrifice the most obvious principles of military propriety and risk the general safety. I shall conclude by observing, that it is well worthy the ambition of a patriot statesman at this juncture, to endeavor to pacify party differences, to give fresh vigor to the springs of government, to inspire the people with confidence, and above all, to restore the credit of our currency."

The distresses of the officers here adverted to were now seen to threaten alarming consequences. Three hundred officers had resigned before the beginning of this year. Of those who remained in the service, a few, driven to despair by their sufferings, became insubordinate. The Jersey brigade had been ordered to join the expedition against the Indians. Its officers presented a memorial to the legislature of that State, demanding a provision for themselves and their troops within three days, stating, if not granted, they might be considered as

having resigned. On receiving this memorial from General Maxwell, Hamilton, in the name of Washington, wrote him, on the seventh of May, in terms of remarkable beauty and delicacy, "I cannot but consider it as a hasty and imprudent step, which, on more cool consideration, they will themselves condemn. I am very sensible of the inconveniences under which they labor; and I hope they do me the justice to believe, that my endeavors to procure them relief are incessant." Having stated the pecuniary embarrassments of Congress, and their sensibility to the merits and sacrifices of the officers, he added: "The patience and perseverance of the army have been, under every disadvantage, such as to do them the highest honor, both at home and abroad; and have inspired me with an unlimited confidence in their virtue, which has consoled me amidst every perplexity and reverse of fortune to which our affairs in a struggle of this nature were necessarily exposed. Now that we have made so great a progress to the attainment of the end we have in view so that we cannot fail without a most shameful desertion of our own enterprises, any thing like a change of conduct would imply an unhappy change of principles, and a forgetfulness, as well of what we owe to ourselves as to our country. Did I suppose it possible this could be the case, even in a single regiment of the army, I should be mortified and chagrined beyond expression. I should feel it as a wound given to my own honor, which I consider as embarked with that of the army at large. But this I believe to be impossible. I confess the appearances in the present instance are disagreeable, but I am convinced they seem to mean more than they really do. The Jersey officers have not been outdone by any others in the qualities either of citizens or of soldiers; and I am confident no part of them would

seriously entertain any thing that would be a stain to their former reputation. The gentlemen cannot be in earnest. They have only *reasoned wrong* about the means of obtaining a good end; and on reconsideration, I hope and flatter myself they will renounce what must appear improper at the opening of a campaign; when under marching orders for an important service, their own honor, duty to the public and to themselves, a regard to military propriety, will not suffer them to persist in a measure which would be a violation of them all. The declaration they have made to the State at so critical a time, that unless they obtain relief in the short period of three days, they must be considered out of the service, has very much the aspect 'of dictating terms to this country;' and the seeming relaxation of continuing till the State can have a *reasonable* time to provide other officers, will be thought only a superficial veil." An order was given that the regiment march without delay. "We are sorry," was the reply, "that you should imagine we meant to disobey orders. It was, and still is our determination to march with our regiments, and to do the duty of officers until the legislature have reasonable time to appoint others, but no longer." A second letter to General Maxwell on this subject, from the pen of Hamilton, stated: "I am sorry to find the gentlemen persist in the principles which dictated the step they have taken, as, the more the affair unfolds itself, the more reason I see to disapprove it. But in the present view they have of the matter, and with their present feelings, it is not probable any new argument that could be offered, would have more influence than the former. While, therefore, the gentlemen continue in the execution of their duty, as they declare themselves heartily disposed to do, I shall only regret that they have taken a step of which they must hereafter see

the impropriety. There is one thing to which I cannot forbear calling your particular attention. I observe in the memorial of which you have sent me a copy, that the gentlemen concerned dwell, among other things, upon the insufficiency of the soldier's pay. This is a doctrine full of dangerous consequences, and which ought not to be countenanced in any way whatever. Neither is it well-founded." "It is important that any misconception on this point should be rectified." The legislature, by the assurance that their demands would be acceded to, induced the officers to withdraw their memorial. Votes were immediately passed for the requisite sum. Payment was made, and the regiment marched. This unavoidable temporizing was the precedent for a similar demand by another line of the army.

"This is an affair," Hamilton wrote on the tenth of May, in behalf of Washington, to the President, "which Congress will no doubt view in a very serious light. To me it appears truly alarming. It shows what is to be apprehended, if some adequate provision is not generally made for the officers. I shall only observe, that the distresses in some corps are so great, either where they were not till lately attached to particular States, or where the States have been less provident, that officers have solicited even to be supplied with the clothing destined for the common soldiery. Coarse and unsuitable as they were, I had not power to comply with their request. The patience of men animated by a sense of duty and honor, will support them to a certain point, beyond which it will not go. I view the conduct of the officers concerned in the present instance as highly blamable; and I have signified my disapprobation. I trust the mode will not be thought too mild, when our situation is considered. The causes of discontent are too great and too general, and

the ties that bind the officers to the service too feeble, to admit of rigor. It is lamentable that the measure" (the provision by the legislature) "should have been delayed till it became in a manner extorted. Notwithstanding the expedient adopted for saving appearances, this cannot fail to operate as a bad precedent."

The insubordination of the army was not the only great source of disquietude at this time. The dissatisfaction of certain States with the protection given to their frontiers, has been previously mentioned. It was conspicuous on the part of Pennsylvania. Hamilton wrote to its President in Washington's name on the twentieth of May: "It is my constant endeavor to cultivate the confidence of the governments of the several States, by an equal and uniform attention to their respective interests, so far as falls within the line of my duty and the compass of the means with which I am entrusted. While I have a consciousness of this, it is natural my sensibility should be affected even by the appearance of distrust. The assurances of the council that I have misconceived their former letters, affords me pleasure proportioned to the pain which that misconception produced."

On the thirty-first of May, instructions from Hamilton's pen were addressed to Sullivan by Washington, as to the conduct of the expedition against the Indians. The main body was to be assembled at Wyoming, which had recently been devastated by Brandt and Butler, and proceed thence to Tioga, and onward "into the heart of the Indian settlements." Intermediate posts were to be established for the security of the convoys, and a stockade fort, or an intrenched camp with a block-house in the centre at Tioga, also a strong post in the centre of the Indian country. The mode of fighting was such as Washington's early experience would suggest: "to make

rather than receive attacks, attended with as much impetuosity, shouting, and noise as possible, and to make the troops act in as loose and dispersed a way as is consistent with a proper degree of government, concert, and mutual support. It should be previously impressed upon the minds of the men, whenever they have an opportunity, to rush on with the war-whoop and fixed bayonet. Nothing will disconcert and terrify the Indians more than this." The end to be attained was a reduction to submission, and "the delivering up of the principal instigators of their past hostility." A surprise of the garrison at Niagara and of the shipping on the lakes, was to be attempted. The performance of their engagements was to be secured by hostages. The main body, under Sullivan, Hand's, Maxwell's, and Poor's regiments, including Butler's rifles, moved up the Susquehanna, and were to be joined by the New York troops who had passed up the Mohawk. The last of August a battle took place with the usual result, the defeat of the Indians. Their settlements were then broken up by a sad devastation. Those who escaped took refuge at Fort Niagara. Sullivan and his army received the thanks of Congress. This was this gallant soldier's last military service. Soon after, with injured health, he retired to New Hampshire, when, grateful for his distinguished conduct, he was again elected to represent that State in Congress.

Some time previous, a negotiation for the exchange of prisoners was opened on the part of Washington in a letter to Sir Henry Clinton, prepared by Hamilton, Congress having recently authorized the settlement of a general cartel. It was observed, "that the present attempt may not prove as unsuccessful as former ones, it is to be hoped that, apprised of the difficulties which have occurred, and with a liberal attention to the circumstances

of the parties, the commissioners will come, disposed to accommodate their negotiations to them, and to level all unnecessary obstructions to the completion of the treaty." In a subsequent letter written by Hamilton to Congress, it is stated, "I am inclined to think that in the present stage of the controversy, the exchange of citizens is impolitic, and affords a temptation to the enemy to distress that part of society more than they might otherwise do. The subjecting them to captivity is, I apprehend, contrary to common practice, except with respect to such as are acting in particular civil offices immediately connected with military duties, as the governors of garrisoned towns and the like." In the same letter the opinion is again expressed, that no part of the main army could be spared to the aid of the Southern States; and that the Carolinas must endeavor to complete their battalions, militia being incompetent to their defence. Still, these States were to be protected. With this view* General Scott was ordered to march the men raised in Virginia to their relief. An expedition of the enemy up the Chesapeake, made at this time under General Matthews, ought not, Washington stated in a letter written by Hamilton, "to delay the succor intended for that quarter." "The injury we can suffer in Virginia appears inconsiderable compared to that which may befall us in Georgia and Carolina. One principal motive of the enemy's present movement in Virginia, may be to create a diversion in favor of their operations in those States."

The delays in raising troops had induced Washington to issue a circular address to the governors of the Eastern and Middle States, urging reinforcements. This paper was prepared by Hamilton. "When we consider," it proceeds, "the rapid decline of our currency, the general

* May 25.

temper of the times, the disaffection of a great part of the people, the lethargy that benumbs the rest, the increasing danger that threatens the Southern States, we cannot but dread the consequences of any misfortune in this quarter, and must feel the impolicy of trusting our security to the precarious hope of a want of enterprise and activity of the enemy." The probability of reinforcements to them is stated, and an earnest appeal made for "the public safety."

At the same time, a blow was projected against the naval force in the harbor of New York, much reduced by recent expeditions. A letter prepared by Hamilton was addressed to the marine committee of Congress with this intent. It proposed the collection of the American frigates to the eastward, and their direction to this point. "I should be loth materially to risk our little fleet, but the object here is so inviting as to induce me to press it upon the serious consideration of the committee. I need not say the success of such an enterprise must essentially depend on the secrecy, boldness and despatch with which it is executed." A correspondent military movement was contemplated. The attempt was not made.

CHAPTER XIX.

Indications were now given of a movement of the enemy up the Hudson, prompted by the reduced strength of the Americans. In several letters addressed by Hamilton to the officers commanding detachments, they were ordered to be on the alert at the earliest warning.

On the third of June he announced, in behalf of Washington, to Congress, his intention to move that day towards the Highlands. A message, also written by him, was sent to West Point, giving an assurance that he was "determined at the utmost hazard to support the fort, and his expectation that it will hold out to the last extremity." Another letter was soon after written by him to General Schuyler in Washington's name, stating that the enemy were in two divisions on the opposite sides of the Hudson—one at Verplanck's Point and the other at Stony Point opposite, and were fortifying. "This will interrupt our easiest communication between the Eastern and Southern States, open a new source of supplies to them, and a new door to distress and disaffect the country. We have the mortification to be the spectators of this, and from the situation of the ground and other circumstances, to see it out of our power to counteract a measure from which we must experience many inconveniences. That part of the army which lay at Middlebrook is now in

Smith's Clove in order to give effectual succor to the fort, in case the enemy's further operations should be directed that way." Washington now visited West Point, whither he ordered General McDougall to repair. In the weakened condition of the army, having posted troops a short distance below, he established his head-quarters at New Windsor, a small village on the western bank of the Hudson, just above the Highlands. From this place, on the first of July, Hamilton, in the name of Washington, informed General Wayne of his appointment to the command of the light infantry of the line, and ordered him to proceed to the vicinity of Fort Montgomery. "If at any time," it was observed, "you see a favorable opportunity for striking an advantageous stroke, you have my permission for improving it, as I rely upon your prudence that you will undertake nothing without a sufficient prospect of success; and unless the advantages to be obtained will compensate the risk to be run. When you have any project of consequence, and circumstances will permit, you will be pleased to communicate it to me previous to the execution."

Four days after, a large party of the enemy proceeded up the Sound, under the command of Tryon, captured and plundered New Haven. Thence they made a descent upon Fairfield, which they laid in ashes. A similar scene of barbarity was exhibited at Norwalk.

Hamilton, in the name of Washington, again wrote to Wayne: "While the enemy are making excursions to distress the country, it has a very disagreeable aspect to remain in a state of inactivity on our part. The reputation of the army and the good of the service seem to exact some attempt from it. The importance of Stony Point to the enemy, makes it infinitely desirable that should be the object. The works are formidable, but per-

haps, on a fuller examination, they may be found accessible. A deserter informed me yesterday, there was a sandy beach on the south side running along the flank of the works, and only obstructed by a slight abatis, which might afford an easy and safe approach to a body of troops. I wish you to take every step in your power to ascertain this, and to gain a more accurate knowledge of the position in general, particularly on the flank and in the rear. Would it answer to send in a trusty, intelligent fellow from you in character of a deserter, on some plan that might enable him to return with expedition? If an attempt is undertaken, I should conceive it ought to be done by way of surprise at night."

The next day, minute instructions were given to Wayne as to the mode of attack, and on the fifteenth of July a detachment was sent forward to support him. In order to distract the attention of the garrison, and to divide their resistance, the troops marched at midnight in two columns, one upon each flank of the fort. It was erected upon a rugged acclivity, which projected into the Hudson, its base, except a small part, surrounded by water. This part was a marsh, with the narrow sandy beach above referred to.

These columns succeeded in crossing the marsh, and a few minutes after midnight the assault began. The first knowledge of the approach was an attack of the pickets. The alarm thus given, a heavy fire of cannon and musketry followed. The undaunted assailants pushed on, entered the works at the point of the bayonet without discharging a shot, and captured the fort. Colonel Fleury, a young, titled soldier of France, endeared to the army, was the first to enter and strike the British standard. With two others of his forlorn party he survived. Wayne, whose impetuous spirit had given him the name of "Mad

Anthony," received a wound in his head. Supposing it to be fatal, he entreated his aids to convey him to the fort there to die, but the wound proved slight. The gallantry of the attack was not less than the forbearance of the victors. Wayne wrote, "The humanity of our brave soldiery, who scorned to take the lives of a vanquished foe when calling for mercy, reflects the highest honor on them, and accounts for the few of the enemy killed. They were only sixty-three of a garrison of six hundred men. The loss of the Americans in killed and wounded did not exceed an hundred." *

Fleury requested that the flag he had captured might be given to him. Congress declined, averse to part "with so high a testimony of a great and brilliant victory." †

Soon after, Hamilton had the pleasure, in the name of Washington, of commending him to the interest of the French envoy in terms of deserved encomium.‡ It was a part of the plan to capture the opposite fortress, called La Fayette, but the orders were not executed in time. Sir Henry Clinton advanced to cover the work at Stony

* Marshall, i. 311, who was in the covering party.

† Henry Laurens to Hamilton.

‡ Fleury writes to Hamilton on the 18th August, a letter which shows the condition of the army: "The officers of the two first battalions of light infantry, which actually command, have applied to me for leave to run over these craggy mountains barefooted, and beg that I would write to head-quarters to have an order from his Excellency to get a pare shoes for each. The shoes they hint to are at New Windsor, and their intention is to pay for. Do not be so greedy for shoes as for my blanket, and think that the most urgent necessity has determined their application. They are quite barefooted.

"N. B. As his Excellency could form a very advantageous idea of our condition in shoes, the appearance of the officers who dined to-day at head-quarters and were not quite without, I beg you would observe to him, if necessary, *that each company has furnished a shoe for their dressing.*" Fleury died a Field Marshal of France.

Point, which, requiring too large a detachment to hold it, was evacuated, and in part demolished. Having re-occupied and repaired it, he retired to New York with his principal force.

Washington was, in the mean time, providing with great solicitude for the defence of West Point. "The movements of the enemy," Hamilton wrote in his name to Putnam, "and the exigencies of the moment, must decide your operations, but every probable case should be supposed beforehand, and a line of conduct preconcerted for each."

Tidings were now received from South Carolina. While Lincoln was proceeding towards Augusta, Prevost crossed into that State and advanced upon General Moultrie at the head of a body of militia and a few continental troops. The militia deserted and Moultrie retired. Lincoln was immediately urged to come to his relief. At first, not believing Charleston in danger, he resolved, in the absence of the enemy, to take possession of Savannah; and with this view moved down the south side of that river. Prevost, assured of the easy capture of Charleston, proceeded on his march, but, from what motive is not known, suddenly halted. The militia of South Carolina hastened to their capital. Reinforcements from Lincoln arrived, together with the remains of Pulaski's legion. Fortifications were rapidly thrown up, and a determined purpose was shown to make a resolute defence. Prevost advanced, crossed the Ashley, encamped, and summoned a surrender. The terms were disputed and rejected. The town prepared for an assault, when, seeing no alternative but to venture carrying it by storm, Prevost recrossed the Ashley and took possession of the Islands St. James and St. John, on the south of the harbor. Lincoln made a rapid march for their

relief, and encamped so near the enemy as to confine them to the former island, which was separated from the main land by the Stono. Prevost saw the necessity of a retreat, and while preparing to change his position, Lincoln attacked a detachment on the Stono with a thousand men, but, it being largely reinforced, Prevost retreated unmolested to his previous encampment. Owing to the great heats on the sea-board, both armies retired. The British first—to Georgia and Florida—Lincoln to the interior of South Carolina. Receiving intelligence of these events, Hamilton, over the signature of Washington, addressed Lincoln on the thirteenth of July: "I am sorry to hear that Colonel Laurens received a wound so soon after his arrival with you, as it prevented his following the dictates of his zeal, and rendering the service for which he is qualified, at a moment very interesting to his country and to his own feelings. But I am happy to hear that it was slight, and that it will not be long an obstacle to his wishes. I sincerely sympathize with you, my dear sir, in the disagreeable aspect of our affairs to the southward, and in the embarrassments to which your situation must necessarily expose you. Had it been possible to have afforded you any succors from the army under my command, you may be assured that public and private motives would have equally induced me to do it. But you are not unacquainted with the insufficiency of our means every where, and the States in general seem to have been for some time past in a profound sleep. They have been amusing themselves with idle dreams of peace, and have scarcely made any exertions for the war.

"Till within a fortnight this army had scarcely received a single recruit, though a large part of it dissolved in the course of the last winter and spring, by the expiration of the term of service for which the men were

engaged. We have now the prospect of a thousand or fifteen hundred levies, at enormous bounties, for nine months, from the States of Massachusetts and Connecticut, which make up our whole expectations of reinforcements. Inferior in strength to the enemy, we have been able to do little more than to take care of ourselves, and guard the communication of this river, which is supposed to be the main object of Sir Henry Clinton's operations; and is certainly the point in which we are most essentially vulnerable. The enemy have as yet received no reinforcements this campaign. Lord Cornwallis is lately arrived from England; and, it is said, a fleet with seven thousand men sailed a few days before him. But for this I have no sufficient authority, and our European advices have been so parsimonious and vague that I cannot venture to hazard an opinion. Our army is principally at this post for its immediate security, and to prosecute with vigor the works necessary to put it in such a state of defence as will give it security with its own garrison, and leave the rest of the army at liberty to operate with confidence elsewhere."

The successful storm of Stony Point inflamed the imagination of the younger officers of the army. The gallant Henry Lee now proposed a plan for the capture of a British post at Paulus Hook, opposite New York. Hamilton wrote him, in behalf of Washington, "The plan you propose for the attack and making good the retreat is well concerted, and such as would be most likely to succeed, if the enterprise were to be carried into execution. But upon the whole, in the present position of the enemy's army, I should deem the attempt too hazardous, and not warranted by the magnitude of the object." In this view he preferred to suspend it, and suggested a procedure he deemed less precarious. Lee represented the practica-

bility of a surprise with a smaller force, upon which Hamilton wrote to Stirling, in Washington's name, authorizing the attempt upon two conditions—that not more than four hundred men be employed,—and that a retreat by a designated route be made practicable. Cautions as to secrecy and the security of the party were given. The attempt proved successful. Lee took the main work of the enemy by surprise at three in the morning of the nineteenth of August, and with the trifling loss of two men killed and three wounded, captured three officers and one hundred and fifty privates. He returned in safety, and received the thanks of the commander-in-chief and of Congress.

These successes kept up the spirits of the army and checked the confidence of the enemy.

This command being given to Lee, caused not a little dissatisfaction among the Virginia light infantry, who objected to the employment of a cavalry officer, as a violation of their rights. Letters were addressed to Washington, stating the grounds of their complaints, by Stirling, Woodford and Mughlenburgh. A reply to the former, written by Hamilton in Washington's name, discusses the matter at much length, and vindicates the right of selection on principle and the usage of other nations in cases "of detachments for particular enterprises out of the common course of service." The idea of a preference in favor of Lee was expressly disclaimed.

Another question of much importance in reference to the officer concerned, was at this time presented. General Greene claimed, that holding his rank in the line when appointed quartermaster-general, entitled him to an equivalent command. Hamilton, in behalf of Washington, wrote to him: "It was not, in my opinion, understood that you were to maintain an actual permanent

command. My idea was, that you were to stand precisely upon the same footing in proportion to your rank, with quartermaster-generals in other services, who, from the best information I am able to obtain, do not usually exercise a regular lineal command, but are eligible by the officer at the head of the army, to occasional commands, either in detachment or in the line, when, in his opinion, it is for the good of the service to employ them in this manner, and it does not interfere with the duties of the department, or with the particular and proper command of other officers. Upon this principle, you were appointed to the right wing in the affair of Monmouth, and were sent to take a command under General Sullivan; and both, as far as I have ever heard, were agreeable to the general sense of the army." The letter closed in terms of warm commendation of his conduct, both in the civil staff and line of the army.

During the conferences of the preceding winter at Philadelphia, Colonel Hamilton had formed a particular acquaintance with Duane, one of the committee appointed by Congress to confer with the commander-in-chief, an able and upright man, of "a gay and open character." *

Letters passed between them. In one, dated a few days after Lee's exploit, Hamilton informed him of the arrival of a large British fleet under Arbuthnot, and that Admiral Collier had appeared in the Penobscot, "put our grand fleet to rout—which were run ashore, abandoned and burned,—the troops and seamen safe." In a subsequent letter, he stated the reinforcement of the enemy at three thousand troops, and an impression that they were about to repair to the West Indies. "The reduction of the enemy's fleets and armies in this country," he wrote, "would be the surest method to effect the complete con-

* Chastellux, i. 219.

quest of the islands, and it would be one of the most fatal strokes Great Britain could receive. The stamina of their military establishment are in this country. The ruin of this, and the capture of their seamen and ships, would be an irrecoverable loss. The West Indies would scarcely have any further prospect of succor, and would be obliged to submit to the power of France, almost without resistance; which might then operate at leisure, aided by ample supplies from this continent, which, I believe, are the principal thing wanting. These reasons may have induced the Count to make us a visit during the season of inactivity in the West Indies."

Intelligence of D'Estaing's approach being received, Hamilton, in the name of Washington, addressed him a letter on the thirteenth of September. "The British land force at New York and its vicinity," he stated, "was near fifteen thousand men—and at Rhode Island between three and four thousand—their naval force one seventy-four, one sixty-four, and two or three frigates, with a few small armed vessels. It was proposed, he should enter the harbor of New York immediately, run a few frigates up the Hudson, when a body of troops would be pushed down to intercept a retreat of the force at King's Ferry. A convenient station for some vessels on the Sound was also advised, to hinder the evacuation of Rhode Island, and a junction of their forces." Lee was despatched with this letter to the seaboard of New Jersey to await the approach of the French fleet, and a disposition of the army was begun in order to carry these purposes into effect.

The arrival of La Luzerne, the successor of Gerard, was at this time communicated to Hamilton by Steuben: "M. de la Luzerne desires me to join him on his route to accompany him to head-quarters. He is about thirty-six

years of age, though he appears younger. In the last war he was aide-de-camp to Marshal Broglio. He appears to be a man of solid sense, and less presumptuous than the people of quality of that country usually are. His manners are prepossessing, and they would be more so if he could speak English. His character appears to me good, and he is less reserved than European ministers usually are. He is a young chevalier of Malta, who is not so much embrowned by his crusades, but that the American beauties will take pains to teach him English in a short time. His secretary, M. de Marbois, is a counsellor of parliament from Metz in Lorraine, speaks good English, and is a man who shows much information and judgment." "The General," Hamilton answered, "requests you will make his respectful compliments to your chevalier, and gives you carte blanche to say every handsome thing you think proper in his name, of the pleasure which this visit will give him. I have no doubt that your portrait, which is executed *en maitre*, will be found a just representation of the original; and if he is as happy as his predecessor in gaining the esteem and confidence of the *men* of this country, with so many talents to conciliate the leaders, his ministry will not be unsuccessful. I augur well for him. General Washington proposes to meet him as a private gentleman, at Fishkill."

On the sixteenth of September a conference took place at West Point. From a minute in Hamilton's hand, who was present, it appears that the views presented in the recent letter to D'Estaing were repeated by Washington, and that he was apprised of a contemplated expedition by Spain, who had entered reluctantly into the war, against the Floridas. A co-operation of the American forces was suggested, from the motive of confirming her good dispositions, and inducing her not only to conclude a treaty with

the United States, but perhaps to assist them with a loan of money. This matter was considered in different aspects, Washington approving the co-operation. The conquest of Canada was also taken into view. The letter written for Washington by Hamilton in relation to it, had been published in France, and was approved by the best military judges. He was informed, that the king of France had a sincere and disinterested desire to see Canada and Nova Scotia annexed to the American confederation, and would be disposed to promote a plan for this purpose, but that he would undertake nothing of the kind, unless the plan was previously approved and digested by the general. Washington stated, whenever the enemy's force should be removed from the United States, "he doubted not it would be a leading object to wrest those provinces from the power of Britain," and he was of opinion that, "though we should have land force enough for the undertaking, without in this respect intruding upon the generosity of our allies, a naval co-operation would certainly be very useful and necessary." Observations were interspersed on the importance of removing the enemy from the United States, to facilitate the operations of France in the West Indies, and "to dispossess the enemy of their dominions on the continent."

This conference prompted a letter, which was written by Hamilton for Washington to General Lincoln, approving in warm terms his conduct near Charleston. The want of support from Virginia had been a source of pain to Washington and of dissatisfaction in Carolina. Patrick Henry, then its governor, wrote the previous year to a leading delegate in Congress:* "Public spirit seems to have taken its flight from Virginia. It is too much the case; for the quota of our troops is not half made up,

* Memoir of Richard Henry Lee, i. 195, 1778.

and no chance seems to remain for completing it. Great bounties are offered, but, I fear, the only effect will be to expose our State to contempt, for, I believe, no soldiers will enlist, especially in the infantry. Can you credit it? no effort was made for supporting or restoring public credit! I pressed it warmly on some, but in vain. This is the reason you get no soldiers. Let not Congress rely upon Virginia for soldiers. I tell you my opinion, they will not be got here until a different spirit prevails." "I mean," Washington wrote soon after † by Hamilton, "to enclose him" (Henry) "a state of the Virginia troops as soon as I can obtain proper returns, that the State may adopt some speedy and vigorous measures for making their numbers more respectable. At present they are but a handful, compared to the quota that they should furnish, and unless something is done, this handful will dwindle to nothing."

A year had now elapsed, and the same apathy and inertness on the part of that State are seen. "I am chagrined," it was observed to Lincoln by Washington, "at the delays which the intended succors from Virginia have met with, the more as by my last accounts they continued. I hope, however, they may still arrive in time to be useful, and that you may not be disappointed in your other expectations." "Southern operations appear to have been for some time past a favorite object in the British cabinet. The weakness of these States affords a strong temptation. The advantages are important and inviting; and even the desperate aspect of their affairs itself may inspire a spirit of enterprise, and teach the necessity of some bold stroke to counterbalance their misfortunes and disgraces, and restore their reputation and influence." The expected arrival of D'Estaing was men-

* Sept. 3, 1778.

tioned, and Lincoln was urged to "make every exertion in his power to be prepared for the worst." *

The Governors of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts were now called on, positive advices being received of D'Estaing's approach, to prepare a militia force to act in conjunction with the continental troops in any operation that might take place. Pilots were also sought to guide the French fleet into New York.

On the seventh of October, a letter was written to D'Estaing by Hamilton, over Washington's signature: "Since my last letter to your excellency on the fourth instant, I have had the honor of a visit from his excellency, Monsieur Gerard. In the conversation we had relative to a co-operation with the fleet and troops under your command, he expressed his doubts of its being possible for you to continue such a length of time as may be essential to the success of the undertaking, and which alone could justify me in going into those extensive preparations absolutely necessary on our part. I have, therefore, appointed Brigadier-general Du Portail and Colonel Hamilton to wait upon your excellency as speedily as possible, and explain to you fully my ideas of the proposed co-operation; the means we shall be able to employ; the obstacles we shall have to encounter on our side; the plans which it may be proper to pursue, and the measures which are taking, and may be taken by the enemy to counteract them. This will enable your excellency to determine what you can with propriety undertake. I shall only add, that if your excellency will engage to co-operate with your whole naval and land force against the enemy's fleet and army at New York, till the winter is so far advanced, that the ice will make it impracticable to

* Hamilton for Washington, to Lincoln, Sept. 28, 1779.

remain with your fleet any longer in port, I will bring twenty-five thousand effective men into the field, and will exert all the resources of the country in a vigorous and decided co-operation.

"Without this assurance on the part of your excellency, it would be inconsistent with my duty to the public, and to the common cause, to incur the expense and hazard which would be inseparable from the enterprise, and the more disagreeable consequences which would attend a failure. I flatter myself your excellency will be fully sensible of the weight of the reasons on which this declaration is founded, and will approve the frankness with which it is made, and with which I have instructed General Du Portail and Colonel Hamilton to disclose to you every circumstance, and every consideration, with which it is necessary you should be acquainted. If your determination should be in favor of the enterprise, I request you will honor me with a line expressive of your ultimate intentions, and that you will communicate to the gentlemen who now wait upon you, the previous measures you propose to pursue, and your sentiments of the most eligible plan of co-operation. I shall act, in consequence, till the period arrives for concerting a final and more determinate plan.

"I would now observe to your excellency, that you may repose the most implicit confidence in General Du Portail and Colonel Hamilton, and I accordingly recommend them to your best civilities and esteem; and having done so, I have only to renew the assurances of that sincere attachment and perfect respect, with which I have the honor to be."

The utmost interest was, at this moment, awakened throughout the country. An interesting crisis was expected; and a long correspondence between Washington

and Hamilton ensued, as the various intelligence was received, which would probably affect the intended enterprise. These letters fully disclose the anxiety of the commander-in-chief, to meet, by a decisive blow, the high-wrought expectations of the people. The enemy were, at this time, filled with dismay. The fortifications at New York were carried on with the utmost activity; the garrisons were withdrawn from the posts on the Hudson; and the troops stationed at Newport, whom Washington had urged should be surprised, were finally transferred to New York.

To gratify Spain, the French councils wished the miltary operations should be directed to the Southern States. Urgent letters were addressed to D'Estaing from Charleston. He was told, his appearance on that coast would ensure the liberation of Georgia. Savannah was still in possession of Prevost. Lincoln's army was within a few days' march. A junction was concerted between him and the troops on board the French fleet. The British detachments were now called in. Lincoln arrived. The town was invested, and its fall in a short time was inevitable. But D'Estaing was unwilling to remain longer upon the coast, fearing the weather, and anxious for the safety of the French West Indies. The only alternatives were to take it by storm, or to retire. The former was resolved, and the ninth of October, before day, an assault took place. The contest on both sides was obstinate and bloody. Both the French and Americans planted their standards on the walls, and endeavored to force the works. A gallant sortie was made, and the assailants were driven back. The French in killed and wounded lost seven hundred men. Pulaski was of the killed, D'Estaing among the wounded. The American loss was two hundred and forty. The British only fifty-five. D'Estaing now

resolved, in despite of Lincoln's remonstrances, to raise the siege. Lincoln returned within the borders of South Carolina. D'Estaing re-embarked, and left the American coast. Soon after, dispersed by a tempest, part of his fleet proceeded to the West Indies, the residue to France.

Weary of inactivity, convinced that the active operations of the war would be in the Southern States, and wishing an opportunity of military distinction in a separate command, Hamilton had applied for permission to proceed to the south. The proposal did not meet the views of the commander-in-chief, and the purpose was relinquished.

He was now led to hope an appointment in the mission to France, the more an object of desire, from his wish to promote the important measure of the introduction of a French army into the United States which he had suggested.* Laurens, on the termination of the Southern

* In a memoir of Colonel Fish, of date March twenty-first, 1822, it is stated, "In one of our confidential conversations, Hamilton, speaking of the Marquis La Fayette, said, 'The United States are under infinite obligations to him beyond what is known, not only for his valour and good conduct as major-general of our army, but for his good offices and influence in our behalf with the court of France. The French army now here, co-operating with us, would not have been in this country but through his means.' He then said, that for some considerable time previous to the arrival of the French army under Count Rochambeau, he (Colonel Hamilton) had conceived the idea and had weighed in his own mind the propriety of such a measure, and having satisfied himself on the subject, *he had suggested the idea* to the Marquis La Fayette, expressing to him at the same time, not only the powerful effect that would be produced in our army and country generally by the introduction of a small military force from France to co-operate with us, but the increased effect that would result should the Marquis himself be appointed to the command. This project met a welcome reception, and after some explanatory remarks as to the details of the plan, the Marquis, with all the zeal and promptitude which characterized him, addressed the French government and their ambassador here on the subject, urging the advantages which would result to both nations from having a French military force in this country. This proposition was immediately patronized and enforced by the family and connections of the Mar-

campaign, decided to repair to head-quarters. On his way he stopped at Philadelphia where Congress was in session. From this place, on the eighteenth of December, he wrote to Hamilton:

"On my arrival in town, I was informed by the President, that Congress had suspended the business of appointing a secretary to their minister plenipotentiary at Versailles until my return, in hopes that I might still be prevailed upon to accept the office. I replied, that I thought my letter upon the subject sufficiently explicit, and assured him of my sincere desire to be excused from serving in that capacity at the present juncture of our affairs.

"He urged the unanimity of the choice with respect to me—the difficulty of uniting the suffrages of all parties, in case of a new nomination, and the advantages of this union. Several delegates of Congress declared to me the embarrassment of Congress since I had declined. One, in particular, suggested to me his apprehension of interest being made for a late delegate of New York, who is candidate for the office, and to whom the world in general allows greater credit for his abilities than his integrity; and said, 'he was determined to oppose him with all his influence.' When I quitted town, the sixteenth, these matters crowded into my mind. I fell into a train of serious reflections and self-examination,—endeavored to investigate whether I had acted consonantly to the *καλον και αγαθον* and fulfilled the duties of a good citizen in the transaction. In fine, I agitated the grand question, whether a citizen has a right to decline any office to which

quis, which were then in power and great influence in France, and adopted by that government. I deem it a duty incumbent on me, and a tribute due to his memory, that the knowledge of this fact should be recorded as an additional evidence of his pre-eminent services to this country."

his countrymen appoint him; upon what that right is founded, and whether it existed in my case.

"After undergoing the severest conflict I ever experienced, sometimes reproaching, sometimes justifying myself, pursuing my journey, or turning retrograde, as the arguments on the one side or the other appeared to prevail, I determined that I had been deficient in the duties of a good citizen. I returned to Philadelphia, communicated my sentiments to the President and two other members, ; declared to them that I thought it incumbent on me, in the first place, to recommend a person equally qualified in point of integrity, and much better in point of ability. That if, unhappily, they could not agree on Colonel Hamilton, and that I was absolutely necessary to exclude a dangerous person, or to prevent pernicious delays, I should think it my duty to obey the orders of Congress. The persons now in nomination, are, Colonel Hamilton, Mr. Lovell, Mr. G. Morris, Major Stewart. Great stress is laid upon the ability and integrity of the person to be employed in this commission. I have given my testimony of you in this and the other equally essential points. My love, as usual. Adieu."

Relieved of all apprehension from the French troops, it was supposed that Sir Henry Clinton, with his superior force might strike a blow at the main army. Washington immediately took precautionary measures, and represented his weak condition to Congress, showing that his total force engaged for the war was about fifteen thousand men, and that the terms of enlistment of the rest would expire within ten months. To supply the requisite numbers, a system of annual drafts was proposed, voluntary enlistments having ceased.

The letters written in his behalf by Hamilton are most gloomy, chiefly referring to the depreciation of the

currency. "The enemy," he states in November, "have great hopes of terminating the war in their favor in another campaign, as they expect confidently the entire ruin of our money, and a failure of provisions for the supply of the army." "I find our prospects," he writes in December from Morristown, "are infinitely worse than they have been at any period of the war, and unless some expedient can be instantly adopted, a dissolution of the army for want of subsistence is unavoidable. A part of it has been, again, several days without bread, and for the rest, we have not, either on the spot or within reach, a supply sufficient for four days. Nor does this deficiency proceed from accidental circumstances, as has been the case on former occasions, but from the absolute emptiness of our magazines every where, and the total want of money or credit to replenish them. We have never experienced a like extremity at any period of the war." As the only resource, he proposed "to solicit a loan of four or five thousand barrels of flour, provided by France for the use of her fleet."

A recent report of the board of treasury gave a fearful exhibition. By this it appeared, that the bills in circulation amounted to the enormous sum of one hundred and sixty millions of dollars; that the public debt was forty millions, nearly three-fourths from domestic sources; and the total product of the taxes, since the commencement of the war, only three millions! Still more to shake the public confidence, Washington was informed, that the enemy had procured from Philadelphia paper made for the last emissions struck by Congress, in order to issue a spurious currency.

With the faint hope of sustaining their credit, Congress passed a vote, pledging themselves not to issue, in bills of credit, a sum exceeding two hundred millions; which they proclaimed to the country, accompanied with

an exposition of the extent of the national resources, and an assurance that full confidence might be placed in the public faith. The wants of the treasury had been so pressing, that intermediate this declaration, and the end of the following month of November, the balance of this limited sum was issued, and Congress were left destitute of this apparently last resource.

In this emergency, the committee of ways and means adopted, as the only remaining expedient, the negotiation of bills on the American envoys in Europe; which, through the recent advices of De la Luzerne, they had reason to expect would be provided for by the aid of France.

The sale of these bills was directed to be made at the rate of twenty-five dollars in continental bills of credit, for four shillings and sixpence sterling, with the condition, that the purchasers should lend a sum equal to the cost of the bills, at an interest of six per cent.

The assurances given to the new envoy from France, of bringing into the field an army of twenty-five thousand men, had caused the greatest anxiety in Congress to expedite the requisitions on the States. The recently proposed change in the currency was based on their co-operation. And yet the legislatures of many of them adjourned without delegating powers to any members of their governments to meet the propositions of Congress, while the returns of others indicated a reluctant and tardy compliance with the urgent demands of the confederation.

The financial embarrassments had given rise to scenes of extravagant, and, in many instances, profligate speculation. Entering the market with a currency stamped with disgrace, not only was government compelled to purchase below the fixed discount of their paper, and thus increase its discredit, but individuals, whose resources

created confidence, came forward as competitors, and engrossed the supplies, which they dealt out to the administration on their own terms. Apprehensions of greater depreciation, inducing the holders of the paper to force it upon sale, with a view to realize something intrinsically valuable, raised the price of every article; while many capitalists, unable to loan securely, withheld their funds from circulation.

The excitement produced by these circumstances, can now be with difficulty imagined. On the one hand, the most violent denunciations were uttered against "engrossers, forestallers and monopolizers," on the other, outcries were raised against the public agents, who frequently abused their trust; an internal war ensued, between debtor and creditor, threatening the most alarming consequences.

These were evils in a great degree necessarily incidental to the state of the country, with a small capital, and deprived of foreign commerce; but there were others wholly attributable to the feeble operation of the confederacy.

The administration of government by Congress, through the medium of committees and boards, greatly augmented the civil expenditure; prevented the possibility of secrecy or system, and the numerous expedients which exigencies suggested, had resulted in the creation of various and conflicting chambers.

The Board of Treasury, which was established in seventeen hundred and seventy-six, had struggled through two years of confusion and delay; frequently changing its members, after which period were added to it the offices of comptroller, auditor, and treasurer, and two chambers of accounts. The duties of these were so defined, as to constitute them checks upon each other: there

being, however, in no one, that superintendence which was necessary to a systematic management of the finances. A twelvemonth had not elapsed when it was found necessary to change this arrangement, and a new organization was adopted.

By this scheme, the Board of Treasury was composed of five commissioners, of whom three were permitted to hold their seats only six months in continuance, and the offices of auditor-general, treasurer, two chambers of accounts, and six auditors, were substituted for the previous plan. To this complicated system, it was afterwards deemed expedient to add an extra chamber of accounts. This last body had just commenced its operations, when the interference with the Board of Treasury in their respective duties, led to the necessity of declaring that board paramount to all the other branches of the treasury department.

The delays attendant upon this state of things in settling the public accounts, added to the inconveniences which the condition of the currency had produced, and the fluctuating measures of the treasury, deprived it of all confidence, and gave sanction to the most crude and absurd schemes of finance.

Among others, it was proposed, in Virginia, to abolish all private commerce, and establish companies, including a State, or parts of a State in districts. The commercial operations to be represented by stock; the price of every article to be fixed by the companies; and to confer upon them the power of taking private goods into their custody. This project was recommended as a scheme "for *appreciating* the currency, and reducing the prices of necessaries." An embargo on provisions followed.

As the pressure was more immediately felt at headquarters, the financial difficulties urged themselves upon

the individuals there with peculiar force. The situation of Hamilton, in the family of Washington, rendering him the confidant of all the embarrassments of his chief, opened to him an enlarged view of the situation of the country; and enforced upon him more strongly the necessity of decisive and immediate relief. His intimacy, also, with the French officers, enabled him to judge of the extent of their expectations, and led him to look forward with apprehension to a failure in the engagements with France, as an event which might, with other causes, lead, if not to an entire abandonment by our ally, to very partial and reluctant succors.

The recent debates in the British parliament, had also shown the strong hopes of the ministry, that the resources of the United States were nearly exhausted, and their expectation that a continuance of the war might lead to a dissolution of the Union, which the distempered state of some parts of the confederacy seemed at a distance to indicate as not improbable.

To meet this great emergency, Hamilton tasked his mind, and he now entered upon that career of financial effort, in which he rendered paramount service to the American people. Moved by the urgent necessities of the country, soon after the army entered winter-quarters at Morristown, he addressed an anonymous letter to Robert Morris, then a delegate from Pennsylvania to Congress. In this letter he states his plan "to be the product of some reading on the subjects of commerce and finance, and of occasional reflections on our particular situation; but that a want of leisure had prevented its being examined in so many lights, and digested so maturely, as the importance requires." He requests, that if the outlines are thought worthy of attention, and any difficulties occur which demand explanations, that a letter should be directed to

James Montague, to be lodged in the post-office at Morristown; and that though the writer has reasons which make him unwilling to be known, if a personal conference should be thought material, that he would endeavor to comply, and asks the letter to be regarded as a hasty production.

After giving as his reasons for not addressing him through the press, the extreme delicacy of the subject, and the effect of discussion in increasing the evil "by exposing our weak side to the popular eye, and adding false terrors to well-founded apprehensions," he proceeded to examine the object of principal concern,—the state of the currency,—as to which he observes, that in his opinion, all the speculations of the country were founded in error, —combats the idea that the depreciation could have been avoided, and the impression which had been entertained that the money might be restored by expedients *within our own resources;* and to this dangerous and prevalent error he attributes the delay in attempting a foreign loan.

He shows that the badness of the money was originally the effect of the condition of the country, and of the exertions made beyond its strength, and not the cause, though, at that time, it partook of the nature of both;— that as prices rose, the value of money fell; and that as the public expenditures became immense, no taxes which the people could bear on that quantity of money which is deemed a proper medium, would have been sufficient for the current demands of the nation, had it been gold instead of paper; that the idea was chimerical, that without resorting to foreign loans, we could do otherwise than augment the quantity of our artificial wealth beyond those bounds which were proper to preserve its credit.

That the quantity of money in circulation, previous to the revolution, was about thirty millions of dollars, which

was barely sufficient for our interior commerce, the foreign trade being carried on by barter; and as the balance of our principal trade was against us, and the specie was transferred to meet that balance, no part of it entered into the home circulation; and that it would have been impossible, by loans and taxes, to bring such part of it into the public coffers as would have served the purposes of the war, without obstructing commercial operations.

He next shows, that the product of the taxes, both from the peculiar situation of the country, and by reference to the condition of other countries, would necessarily be inadequate to our wants.

Hence he infers, that Congress, when their emissions rose to thirty millions, were *obliged*, in order to keep up the supplies, to go on creating artificial revenues by new emissions; and that the only remedy then was a foreign loan, which, judiciously applied, and assisted by a vigorous taxation, would have created a credit that might have prevented the excess of emissions. He contends, on the same principles, that in proportion to the extent of the depreciation at that time, was the impossibility of raising the money value by any other means, and that in the existing situation of the country, a FOREIGN LOAN was the only expedient.

"These reasonings may prove useless," he adds, "as the necessity of a loan is admitted, but *that his object is to establish good principles*, the want of which has brought us to the desperate crisis we have arrived at, and may betray us into fatal mistakes."

The next inquiry raised is,—How is the loan to be employed?—Two plans were stated to have been in contemplation:—one, that of buying up the paper, which he shows would have been impracticable, from the rapid artificial appreciation of it, and would require means far

beyond the compass of the national resources, while this appreciation would be more relative to the purchasing medium, than to the prices of commodities, as the value of the paper might be raised by a combination of individuals, while the reduction of prices must necessarily be slow, depending, as it would, on the sentiments of the great body of the people.

The result of this plan, he states, would be "that the money would return into circulation almost as fast as it was drawn out, and at the end of the year the treasury would be completely empty;—the foreign loan dissipated, and the state of the finances as deplorable as ever. It would be much better, instead of purchasing up the paper currency, to purchase the supplies with the specie or bills."—"A great source of error," he observes, "in disquisitions of this nature, is the judging of events by abstract calculations, which, though geometrically true, are false as they relate to the concerns of beings governed more by passion and prejudice, than by an enlightened sense of their interests. A degree of illusion mixes itself in all the affairs of society. The opinion of objects has more influence than their real nature. The quantity of money in circulation, is certainly a chief cause of its declining; but we find it is depreciated more than five times as much as it ought to be:—the excess is derived from opinion,—a want of confidence. In like manner, we deceive ourselves, when we suppose the value will increase in proportion as the quantity is lessened; opinion will operate here also, and a thousand circumstances may promote or counteract the principle."

The other plan proposed, was to convert the loan into merchandise, and import it on public account. This plan, though better than the former, he deems also liable to great objections, but not wholly to be rejected; and after

suggesting a tax in kind, he contends, that "the only plan which can preserve the currency, is one that will make it the immediate interest of the moneyed men to co-operate with government in its support. This country is in the same predicament in which France was previous to the famous Mississippi scheme, projected by Mr. Law. Its paper money, like ours, had dwindled to nothing, and no efforts of the government could revive it, because the people had lost all confidence in its ability. Mr. Law, who had much more penetration than integrity, readily perceived that no plan could succeed, which did not unite the interest and credit of rich individuals with those of the state; and upon this he framed the idea of his project, which so far agreed in principle with the Bank of England,—the foundation was good, but the superstructure too vast. The projectors aimed at unlimited wealth, and the government itself expected too much, which was the cause of the ultimate miscarriage of the scheme, and of all the mischiefs that befell the kingdom in consequence. It will be our wisdom to select what is good in this plan, and in any others that have gone before us, avoiding their defects and excesses. Something on a similar principle in America, will alone accomplish the restoration of paper credit, and establish a permanent fund for the future exigencies of government."

He then states his plan to be an American bank, to be instituted by Congress for ten years, under the denomination of "The Bank of the United States."

The basis of this bank was to be a foreign loan of two millions sterling, to be invested in the bank as a part of its stock; a subscription to be opened in the currency of two hundred millions of dollars, and the subscribers to be incorporated; the payment of which to be guarantied by the government on the dissolution of the bank, by ten

millions of specie, being at the rate of one for twenty, or by a currency bona fide equivalent, and the annual money taxes to become part of the stock.

All the remaining paper to be called in, (at the option of the possessor,) and bank notes to be issued in lieu of it for so much sterling, payable to the bearer in three months from the date, at two per cent. per annum interest; a pound sterling to be estimated at two hundred and sixty-six and two-thirds of the existing dollars; * the interest payable punctually in specie at the end of the three months, when the possessor might have the bank notes renewed, or receive the sum deposited in the old paper; all the money issued from the bank to be of the same denomination, and on the same terms.

An annual loan of two millions sterling to be furnished to Congress by the bank, at four per cent., and the whole, or part of the stock, by arrangement between the bank and a Board of Trade, which he contemplated, to be employed in commerce. If only a part, the residue to be loaned occasionally, by permission of Congress, in such sums as may be thought expedient, at an interest of six per cent., on private securities; the government to hold one half of the stock, and the bank to be managed by trustees of the stockholders, under the inspection of the Board of Trade.

The part of the manuscript which details the effect of the commercial operations, is mutilated; but the result is stated to be, that the war might be carried on three years, and the government incur a debt of only four hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling, above the guaranty of the subscription, which it is probable would not be required, as the corporation would find it their interest to obtain a renewal of their charter.

* Sixty dollars for one dollar of four shillings and sixpence sterling.

Having presented this plan, he observes, "that he does not believe that its advantages will be as great as they appear in speculation, from a less profitable commerce than is supposed and from other causes. I am aware how apt the imagination is to be heated in projects of this nature, and to overlook the fallacies which often lurk in first principles. But when I consider, on the other hand, that this scheme stands on the firm footing of public and private faith, that it links the interest of the state in an intimate connection with those of the rich individuals belonging to it; that it turns the wealth and influence of both into a commercial channel, for mutual benefit, which must afford advantages not to be estimated; that there is a defect of a circulating medium, which this plan supplies by a sort of creative power, converting what is so produced, into a real and efficacious instrument of trade; I say, when I consider these things, and many more that might be added, I cannot forbear feeling a degree of confidence in the plan, and at least hoping that it is capable of being improved into something that will give relief to our finances."

To enlarge its advantages, he suggests that a variety of secondary expedients may be invented, and the whole scheme of annuities engrafted upon it.

That the European loan might be converted into a European bank, to aid the American bank, by engaging the interests of the wealthy, and that the bank might also make contracts with the government for the supplies of the army, on terms mutually beneficial. He then expatiates on the reasons for giving one half of the stock to the government, and answers the objection that the plan might be prejudicial to trade, by proposing a guaranty from the government not to grant any "exclusive privileges."

To the scheme, notes are appended, explanatory of the operation of the project; in one of which he states, "a Board of Trade ought immediately to be established. The royal council of France, and the subordinate chambers in each province, form an excellent institution, and may, in many respects, prove a model. Congress have too long neglected to institute a good scheme of administration, and throw public business into proper executive departments. For commerce, I prefer a board; but for most other things, single men. We want a Minister of War, a Minister of Foreign Affairs, a Minister of Finance, and a Minister of Marine. There is always more decision, more despatch, more secrecy, and more responsibility where single men, than where bodies are concerned. By A PLAN OF THIS KIND, WE SHOULD BLEND THE ADVANTAGES OF A MONARCHY AND OF A REPUBLIC, IN A HAPPY AND BENEFICIAL UNION. Men will only devote their lives and attention to a profession on which they can build reputation and consequence, which they do not share with others. If this plan should be approved, Congress ought, immediately, to appoint a Minister of Finance. He ought to be a man of ability, to comprehend it in all its consequences, and of eloquence to make others comprehend and relish it. He ought, besides, to have some general knowledge of the science, and to address himself to some of the most suitable moneyed men, to convince them of the utility of the project. The Congress must establish the bank, and set it agoing. I know of no man that has better pretensions than yourself, and shall be very happy to hear that Congress have said, 'Thou art the man.'"

At a time when the intricate science of finance was little understood in the United States, the clear, sound opinions taken in this paper, cannot escape observation, rejecting all empiric expedients, and indicating as the only

basis of a permanent system, as shown in the policy of elder nations, the combination of public with private capital in the institution of a great national, financial agency.

Hamilton's project was not embraced in all its parts, but it had its influence on the mind of the eminent financier of the Revolution. Within a short time, a plan of a bank* in Pennsylvania was introduced by Robert Morris, founded on private contributions, to furnish the army with temporary supplies; and which, though limited in its purpose, led on to farther results.

The idea of Executive Departments, instead of boards, also, from this time, became a topic of discussion in Congress; and was one of the first steps towards the establishment of an efficient national government.

* In the Life of Gouverneur Morris, i. 235, a letter from him to a friend states: "The first bank in this country was planned by your humble servant." This may refer to Robert Morris's plan, reported to Congress June 22d, 1780, but more probably to that proposed in *May*, 1781. G. Morris was appointed his assistant *July* 6, 1781. Hamilton's, therefore, *preceded both.*

END OF VOL. I.

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